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New Masses

The World Gone Mad

By ROBERT FORSYTHE

Last in Peace, Last in War

By LOREN MILLER

Labor Party on the Way — By CARL REEVE

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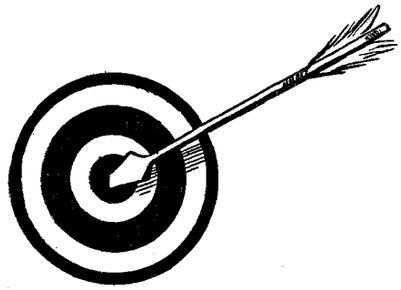

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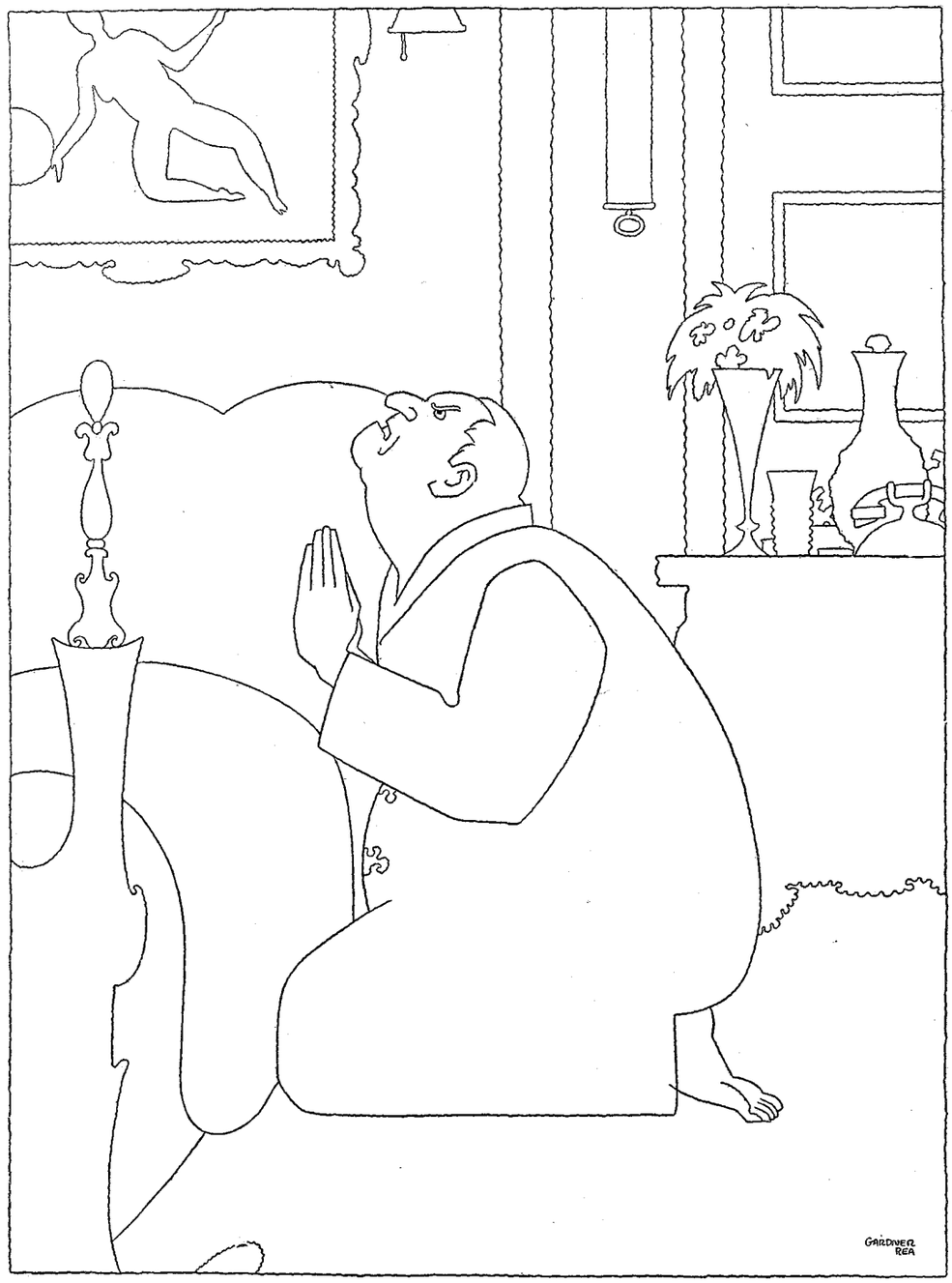
new Masses

SEPTEMBER 24, 1935

Mussolini Mortgages Italy

MUSSOLINI has mortgaged Italy, already impoverished, to pay for his invasion of Ethiopia. Only new territory that fascism can exploit profitably, territory that will yield sufficient to pay off the mortgage, promises any hope for the bankrupt Italian economy. Apparently counting on the tacit support of the other imperialist powers, Mussolini envisaged no serious interference. Now he finds the League of Nations threatening to upset his whole neatly-arranged program. For England fears repercussions of an African war in Egypt and India and is worried over its control of the Suez Canal. The British fleet, therefore, is with well-publicized "mystery" concentrated in the Mediterranean, lending point to England's recent concern for the League. France backs Britain's stand—a little vaguely, to be sure, but with sufficient clarity to cause Mussolini discomfort. For France has almost abandoned hope that Italy can be counted on as a strong and valuable ally in the event of German *anschluss* with Austria; only England can give the necessary assurance that the status quo in Europe will not be altered. The smaller Balkan and Baltic states trail along, realizing the importance to themselves of insisting on the defense of a weaker League member against the aggression of a major imperialist nation.



"AND REMEMBER WHEN *I* PRAY I EXPECT RESULTS!"

ALONE of all the nations, the Soviet Union pledges itself in definite terms to preserve peace uncompromisingly, urging "not to allow attacks on the League Covenant as an instrument of peace and to make use of it in all cases of aggression, irrespective of their origin or object . . ." Litvinov, representing the Soviet Union at the League Council, went further than this militant anti-war statement. He added:

> The Soviet government is opposed to the system of colonies, to spheres of influence and to imperialism. For the Soviet government there is only one question—of defending the Covenant as an instrument of peace.

His words, direct and forceful, were in sharp contrast to the evasions of spokesmen from other nations. He reiterated concrete proposals of action—the definition of what constitutes an aggressor nation; the transformation of the impotent disarmament conference into a permanent peace conference; total disarmament by all nations. The time for evasion is over. If the capitalist nations sincerely desire peace they must follow the lead set by the Soviet Union. Otherwise, world war is a matter of weeks or months. In the face of the relentless peace policy of the U.S.S.R., the other nations continue to play the old game—the game of keeping their own colonies and imperialist concessions intact while preventing the others from gaining too large a share of the world's riches. And simultaneously, Germany and Japan, free from even the nominal restrictions of membership in the League, prepare for war and wait only the slightest encouragement to attack neighboring countries. Each casts greedy eyes toward the Soviet Union. If Italy manages to embroil the other nations, the time might be propitious to go ahead with their own schemes.

Vigilantes Won't Work

IN the confession-story of anti-labor terror which we reprinted last week from the The Santa Rosa Press-Democrat, the vigilante concluded his tale: "It's up to the Communists to get out now, or suffer the consequences." The following day, Sonoma County was deluged with leaflets headed "WE WILL

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STAY." But though terrorism failed to drive out militant working-class leaders, it did frighten migratory workers. The result is an acute labor shortage in the hop fields and apple orchards. Farmers cannot get necessary labor—particularly at the offered wage of $1.25 a day. The average worker picks just about one hundred pounds a day; that is, if he works ten hours. At this basic wage of ten to twelve cents an hour, the workers must pay an average of fifty cents daily for board and sometimes an additional amount for sleeping quarters. Those who have tents and cook their own meals must often travel as far as five miles to the nearest store, where prices are 10 to 15 percent higher than in town. Camps supplied by the farmers are almost uniformly unsanitary, the water often bad.

TO provide labor for farmers—most of whom are controlled by the large banks and corporations—8,000 men were summarily cut off of relief rolls in the San Francisco bay area. Starve or work in the fields—at starvation wages—was the command. This is nothing new in California: men on relief in rural counties are nearly always dropped from the rolls as the crops come in. But seldom has this practice spread to metropolitan districts. On September 4, the dropping of men from relief coincided with the inability of farmers to get workers in localities where vigilantes had been indulging in night ridings, beatings, tar-and-feather parties. Still, though off relief, workers refused to stick their heads into the vigilante noose; nor were they willing to scab on the regular migratory workers. So far, less than 500 have left the vicinity of San Francisco to go into the fields. And through the mass action of the Federation of Unemployed and Allied Organizations, the rising protest over the new move to conscript wages, most of those thrown off relief rolls have been put back on the lists. Relief directors announce that no more men will be cut off. The vigilantes are learning that terrorism, though a great sport when they outnumber their opponents one hundred to one, does not always get the crops harvested.

United Front in Action

THE strongest weapon in the hand of the working class in the struggle against the war danger and imminent fascism is the united front. More and more, liberals sincerely opposed to reaction realize that only in alliance with the broad masses can their fight have significance and effectiveness. Heywood Broun's recent endorsement of two Communist Party candidates widens the support of the only party in New York City militantly opposed to the drive against the workers and the middle classes. Broun, president of the American Newspaper Guild, not only endorses Clarence Hathaway, editor of The Daily Worker, who is campaigning for election to the Assembly and Carl Brodsky, New York Communist leader who is running for a place on the Board of Aldermen, but has also expressed his willingness to speak for them. In San Francisco, Redfern Mason, who lost his position as music critic after years of service on Hearst's Examiner because he dared accept the presidency of the Newspaper Guild local, is now a candidate for mayor on the Labor Party ticket. Backing him is a broad group including the rank and file of militant trade unions, the Epic Clubs, the Democratic Council and the Communist Party. Plans for organizing the Labor Party in other sections of the country gather momentum: the positive stand by Broun and Mason in supporting the united front points the way for all leading liberals who realize the urgent necessity of backing liberal pronouncements with action.

W.P.A. Versus P.W.A.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT essayed the role of a diplomat last week to settle a bitter quarrel between Relief Administrator Harry L. Hopkins and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes over the question of allotment of relief funds. Mr. Ickes sought increased appropriations for the Public Works Administration while Mr. Hopkins argued that available money should be diverted to the Works Progress Administration. Mr. Roosevelt placated both of them by drawing up a plan under which immediate emphasis will be placed on W.P.A. but with the proviso that construction under P.W.A. will be accelerated later. Ostensibly the division of opinion centers around the question of whether it is more advisable to spend large sums on material under P.W.A. or to pour money into W.P.A. where the larger share of payments goes for wages. The question of union wages underlies the whole controversy; P.W.A. pays union wages while workers under W.P.A. have to be content with the $19 to $94 coolie-wage scale. Mr. Roosevelt's decision to concentrate on W.P.A. in the immediate future is in effect an endorsement of the old share-the-work program. It is an attempt to stifle discontent by spreading wage payments over a large number of workers. That was the original plan of W.P.A. but the whole scheme has bogged down badly. Ushered in with a promise of providing work for 3,500,000 men, W.P.A. has employed only 837,536 workers and of that number 519,122 are in C.C.C. camps where many of them were already employed prior to the passage of the act.

THE failure of W.P.A. to measure up to the extravagant promises made for it is due partly to the interminable red tape in which it has become entangled. No doubt there has also been some deliberate slowing up of the program under the theory that the workers can live through the summer and fall somehow and that W.P.A. will have more value as a measure to tide the masses over the hard winter months. If it is in full swing by next summer, W.P.A. will play an important part in bolstering up the Democratic Party for the fall elections. Meanwhile the revolt against the W.P.A. wage scale is slowly gathering momentum. New York workers, hampered by the unwillingness of A. F. of L. leaders to move, are still conducting strikes on several projects. Similar resistance is being registered in other parts of the country with the latest uprising reported from the South where 3,500 hod-carriers went on strike in Birmingham. The effect of inadequate relief has already been strikingly demonstrated. General Hugh Johnson was forced to admit last week that one-sixth of the W.P.A. applicants in New York City are physically unfit for work. Since it will be impossible for any person to maintain a decent standard of living on W.P.A. wages the effect of this latest "relief" measure will be to further the work of tearing down the health of American workers.

Alabama's Ordinances

ALABAMA'S anti-sedition bill which Governor Graves permitted to become law by default has been repealed by both houses of the state's legislature. The opposition of organized labor and large sections of the middle class was too much for even the powerful lobby

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of the coal and steel barons and the landlords. The city of Birmingham still retains the vicious Downs literature ordinance which prescribes heavy fines and up to six months in jail for possession or distribution of "subversive" literature. Three workers, two Negroes and one white, have been convicted under this ordinance and one is still serving a sentence on the road gang. Two others are facing trial this week. In Bessemer, a city with a similar ordinance, Ed. Sears, a Negro, was recently arrested, denied counsel, "tried" and sentenced to ten months in jail,—all within three hours—for possession of Sasha Small's pamphlet on Angelo Herndon. It was against this law that the writers' delegation of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners protested on the recent visit to Birmingham. Members of the delegation sold copies of The Daily Worker openly but Birmingham authorities did not order their arrest because of fear of submitting the Downs law to a constitutional test. The practice now is to use the law as a weapon to harass militant workers—under its terms prisoners may be held in jail for seventy-two hours without bail. While the writers were not able to force a test of the law they awakened doubts as to its constitutionality and workers were heartened by their action. With the defeat of the state anti-sedition bill, those who stand for the preservation of civil liberties should concentrate their fire on the Birmingham and Bessemer ordinances.

Housing in Harlem

THREE thousand eight hundred and seventy-one persons live in New York City's most crowded tenement block, according to the Mayor's Committee on City Planning. That block is in Harlem and with the exception of a few shopkeepers the tenants are Negroes. Half of the tenants are on relief and most of the ten-foot-by-fifteen rooms are shared by several persons. Four and five-room apartments rent for $35 to $45 per month—to people who are able to earn $60 to $80 a month. Dumbwaiters are out of repair in most the apartment houses and tenants either place their garbage in the hall for collection or throw it down the dumbwaiter shaft. Only one tenement house in the entire block has an elevator and in many of the rooms the sun never shines. Six out of the seven other New York City blocks with a population of more than 3,000 are also found in Harlem. The Mayor's Commission did not indicate health, juvenile delinquency and crime problems that grow out of such congestion but they may well be imagined. It was conditions of this kind that bred the Harlem outbreak of last March 19. Six months after that occurrence nothing has been done to relieve the situation, beyond the purchase of a tract to build apartments to house not more than seven hundred families. And as yet not a spadeful of dirt has been turned on that project.

Dollar Diplomacy Wins

WHEN Mr. Hull discovered that the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company did not care to admit its part in Mr. Rickett's Ethiopian concession, liberals throughout the country rejoiced that the United States was keeping out of imperialist embroilments. Mr. Roosevelt, one of our foremost liberals, with his faculty for reviving worn-out phrases, cheerfully announced from Hyde Park that "dollar diplomacy is no longer recognized by the American government." Well, we do not like to allude to American marines in Nicaragua, American State Department officials dictating Cuba's internal policies and the business strategy of half a dozen Latin American countries. There is something much nearer home, the exhausted colony of Puerto Rico, in which a new kind of dollar diplomacy is operating to keep the workers in our Atlantic colony down to mere subsistence. Dr. Ernest Gruening, famous liberal, is head of the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, which has just received (at least, pending the Hyde Park redistribution of the relief spoils) thirty million dollars for a program of projects to rehabilitate the downtrodden Puerto Ricans. There are vast and extensive plans, the chief of which is purchase of sugar-cane lands to be used for some type or other of subsistence farming for the landless natives.

THE Puerto Rico workers receive miserable wages on the plantations or in the sugar mills of the island, and if they are small sugar planters, get little or nothing for the cane they help turn into Amerian sugar and liquor profits. What does the Reconstruction Administration, under Gruening and Ickes, offer them? Well, it started to offer them the security wage on the work projects that will begin their reconstruction. But it soon discovered that the security wage, while lower than the prevailing wage in almost every state in continental United States, is

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WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager*

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considerably *higher* than the prevailing wage in Puerto Rico. In short, they were becoming too magnanimous, it would raise the standard of living of the Puerto Ricans, it might actually lead to some reconstruction. But it would also mean that the low-paid labor available for work on the plantations and in the sugar mills would demand higher wages for work in private industry. So Mr. Hopkins, normally at swords' points with Mr. Ickes about the distribution of the swag, promptly falls into ready line when it means joining in a common attack on workers and announces an administrative order which withdraws the monthly security wage from the territories and establishes prevailing wages on work projects.

Who is Splitting the Teachers?

FOLLOWING the defeat of their attempt to have its charter revoked by the national convention, President Henry R. Linville and Legislative Representative Abraham Lefkowitz have resigned from the New York local of the American Federation of Teachers. A majority of the executive committee followed their lead but most of the members appear to be satisfied to remain in the union. Mr. Linville and Mr. Lefkowitz, Old Guard Socialists, are blaming union troubles on the Communists, but Paul Porter, in the name of the Socialist Party National Labor Committee, has issued a statement in which he says that "the majority of Socialists in Local 5, while in strong disagreement with the tactics of some administration opponents, have been unable to give support to Dr. Linville and Dr. Lefkowitz." Administration opponents in the teachers' local include persons holding diverse political opinions and the conflict really centers around the issue of union democracy, of which Mr. Lefkowitz said there had been entirely too much. Because national officials refused to oust the New York local, the officers who have resigned are said to be planning to ask the American Federation of Labor to investigate the Teachers' Federation. Unless strong pressure is brought to bear immediately there is danger that William Green may revoke the Teachers' Federation charter and issue another charter to a dual union to be headed by Linville and Lefkowitz.

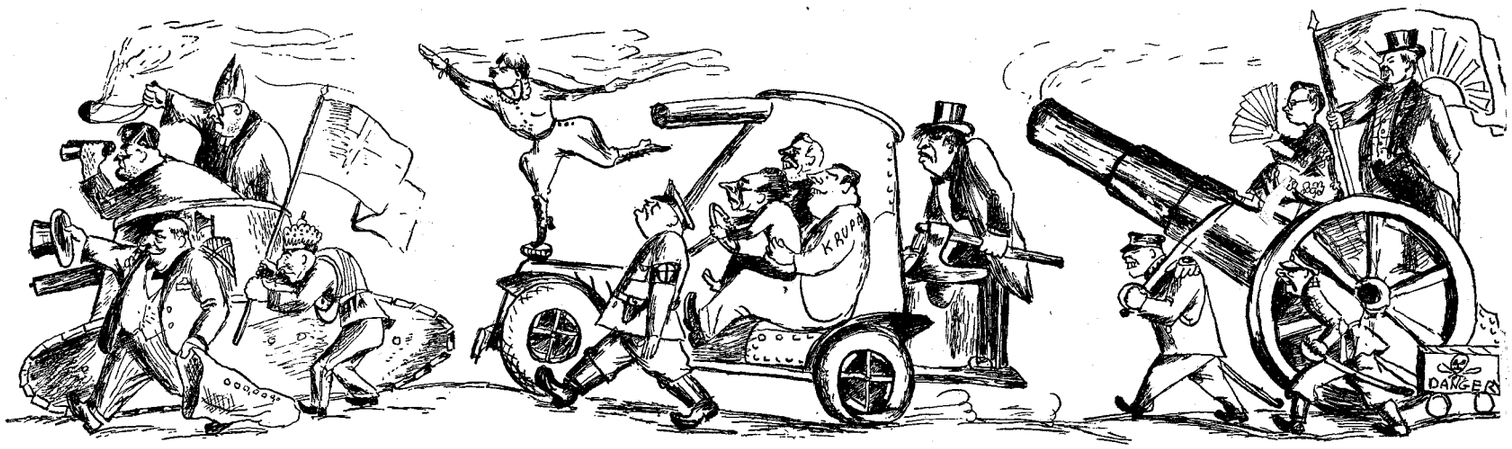
Consumers' Research

FOUR thugs supplied by a notorious strike-breaking detective agency are "guarding" the plant of Consumers' Research in Washington, N. J. They have announced that forty more thugs are ready to appear. Stories of impending bombing of the plant by strikers and of vigilante mob action against the strikers, are being spread by J. B. Matthews, vice-president of Consumers' Research, according to the sworn statement of two magazine editors and two subscribers. And on September 13, the organization obtained a temporary injunction restraining the activities of pickets. Now, with the strike entering the third week, the board of directors of Consumers' Research has sent a printed statement of its side of the case to subscribers. This statement is characterized by John Heasty, president of the A.F. of L. union at Consumers' Research, as containing "more deliberate misrepresentations and actual falsehoods than have ever appeared in any advertisement denounced by Consumers' Research." It ends with the astonishing disclosure that big business is using the strike to wreck C.R., so that it can be taken over by the Communist Party. The New York Consumers' Research Strike Committee, 41 East 20 Street, New York City, has issued a general appeal to C.R. subscribers to send their names and addresses to the committee, so that the union's reply to the board's statement can be mailed to them.

The First Book Union Book

A STEEL organizer, a factory hand, an agrarian worker, a house painter and a Missouri farmer, as well as many well known writers are represented in the first Book Union selection. The book, *Proletarian Literature in the United States,* to be published October 7, deals with the American worker in motion: in strikes, demonstrations, meetings and other activities of militant workers. Operating as a regular book club, the Book Union will select one outstanding book from the monthly lists of all publishers and offer it to members at a special discount. Members may order the selection or they may choose from a wide list of recommended books also offered at special prices. Subscribers need not buy a book a month; they are required to purchase only two books a year from the Union, although special dividends are offered those who buy four or more books during the year. The Book Union will also publish a monthly critical bulletin which will be distributed free to members and will serve as a guide to current left-wing literature. Memberships cost one dollar a year for individuals and organizations and members have already been enrolled from thirty-four states and three Canadian provinces. Full details about the Book Union may be obtained from Marian Klopfer, executive secretary, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

PARADE IN EUROPE — **By Eugene Cooper**



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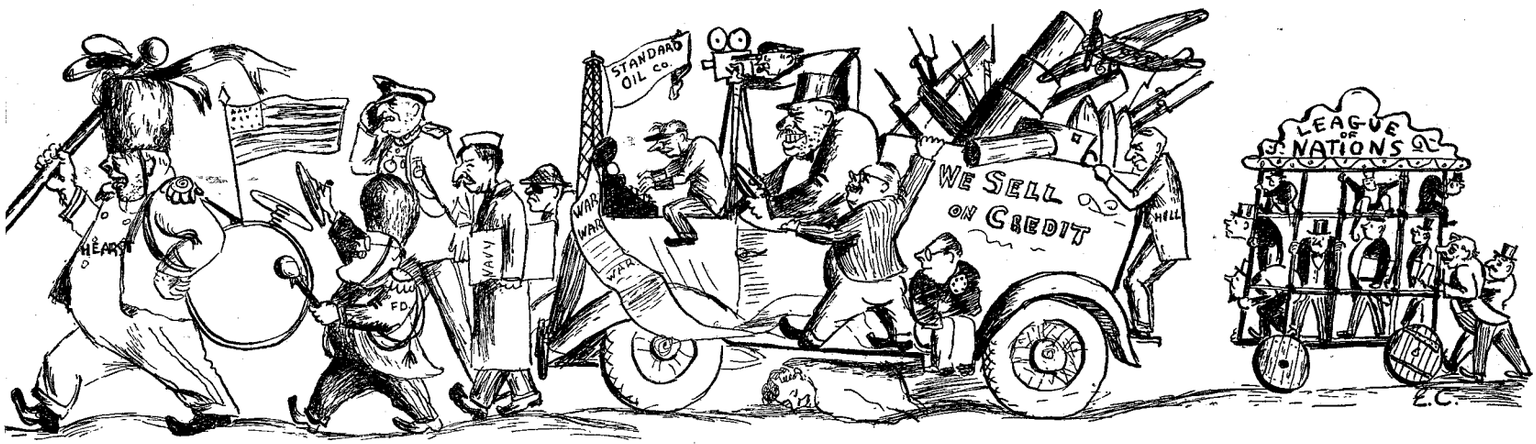
Labor in Action Again

WHEN Washington launched its latest anti-labor offensive upon the termination of the N.R.A.—the substitution of the "security" wage scale for the prevailing wage rate, the outright slashes in wages and increases in hours of labor, etc.—nobody foresaw how vigorous a counter-offensive Labor could muster on such short notice. The past fortnight witnessed a nation-wide series of class conflicts. More than the "brisk skirmishes" one of the news agencies termed them, they presaged a period of widespread and intense class warfare. Minneapolis . . . the Black Belt . . . the New York waterfront . . . the needle trades . . . textile . . . the school teachers . . . everywhere it was the same. Labor is on the move and Labor's chiefs—the ones at the very top—are battling fiercely to defend the interests of—Capital. Green, assailing the Red Flag, found himself rebuffed by the teachers in Cleveland, by the rubber workers at Akron, by the automobile workers in Detroit. The man at the bench realizes today, more than ever, that unity brings strength and he realizes too that the greatest factor in creating disunity is the Red scare.

Only through miraculous sleight of hand have the leaders of the A. F. of L. prevented the 400,000 bituminous miners from going on the picket line; they have been held back only by the most fervid appeals for loyalty to Roosevelt and the flag and by the promises of a Utopia under the Guffey Bill. Five times since April 1 John L. Lewis has led the embittered miners to a picket line and back again without going into battle. The coal diggers object to the current agreement because of its open-shop clauses. They object, too because the cost of living has risen by 25 percent since the present contract was signed. Wages, of course, stood still. The miners want the six dollar a day scale, the 30-hour week, full union recognition and improved working conditions. Lewis promised them the sky in the Guffey Bill. It was passed and today the miners are discovering the "little N.R.A. in the coal industry" not only does nothing about fundamental demands but promises nothing about minimum wages or maximum hours. Lewis has carefully refrained, in all his tricky maneuvers, from preparing the miners for combat, from constructing the necessary strike machinery, raising relief, from charting the war-maps.

Though the men in coal have been restrained from action, the men in other industries have broken through. The ship radio operators' strike, for example, spread from New York to Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Two large steamship companies have signed agreements with the American Radio Telegraphists Association, the Black Diamond and the Grace Line. The latter, one of the largest in New York, conceded all the union's demands. Down in Dixie, the Share Croppers' Union was making labor history in a valiant strike against the traditional weapons of the Southern landowner—hunger, shotgun and bloodhound. The head of the Share Croppers' Union describes the terror in a letter written us from his hide-out which is printed elsewhere in this issue. Trolley car employes in Birmingham have been supplied police photographs of militant sharecroppers and ordered to turn those men they recognize over to the authorities. The spirit of unity grows swiftest where terror is greatest. The most significant characteristic of this strike is the support white small farmers and croppers are giving the Negro sharecroppers. Adjacent to the Black Belt 3,500 W.P.A. workers in Alabama have gone on strike against an impending 50 percent wage cut. The "no strike agreement" of the State Federation of Labor was repudiated. Simultaneously, in New York, the W.P.A. workers are not accepting the "security" wage meekly. They are battling General Johnson tooth and nail, in many cases picketing on the building projects for the union scale.

And in Minneapolis, a Farmer-Labor Mayor permitted his police to shoot into 5,000 pickets at the Flour City Ornamental Works. Two, to date, have been killed and more than 50 injured. The Governor, Floyd P. Olson, also a Farmer-Laborite, was too busy the day of the shooting to see a delegation of the strikers. The rank and file are up in arms. They demand the expulsion of the mayor from the party, punishment of responsible police officials and they insist upon their organization remaining intact so that the promises made at election time will be assured fulfillment. Everywhere the sentiment grows for a Labor Party which, based upon the trade unions, will represent the bulk of the working class and its allies of the middle classes. In times like these, when the blackjack and the revolver are speedily invoked in labor struggles, political lessons are speedily learned.



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BE-KIND-TO-PIRATES WEEK

Russell T. Limbach

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The World Gone Mad

"We Ask You Only If You Want to Live"

ROBERT FORSYTHE

FROM experience I find that I am no more sensitive than my fellowman. If, therefore, I am oppressed by the feeling that there are malevolent forces at work in the world which may eventually bring us all to our ruin, I can assume that I am not alone in my forebodings. There is the difference, however, that while an ordinary newspaper reader may have moments of fear and moments of hope according to the trend of events at Geneva or Paris or Rome, there is no such solace possible for anyone who understands these forces at work.

It is to the interest of the British, for example, to preserve the League of Nations and to consider Mussolini's actions in Ethiopia as a form of aberration common to power-crazed dictators but that is an analysis which solves no problems. The truth is that peace, quite apart from any ethical considerations, is essential now to the safety of the British Empire. The further truth is that Mussolini, power-crazed or not, has no alternative but war for the economic problems of Italy. This would be true whether Mussolini was in command in Italy or whether the country was governed by Mr. George Lansbury, the Christian pacifist. What we are perpetually faced with are the contradictions of capitalism and it is futile merely to take out our wrath on a Mussolini or a Hitler, the principal war-mongers, when what is at fault is something more profound and fundamental, of which they are the symbols.

Put in the bluntest form, there is no lasting peace possible on this earth while capitalism lives. Neither prayer nor good intentions nor the most startling reversal of action by financiers and industrialists can alter the matter. If Mussolini, Hitler and the international armament trust were to turn angels tomorrow it would make no difference. When Ramsay MacDonald and the Labor Party were in power in Great Britain, they were as ruthless with India as any Lord Curzon or Sir Samuel Hoare. So long as they desired to maintain capitalism there was no choice for them. The liberals are perennially shocked by the surrender of principle of liberals reaching places of political control, but there is nothing more obvious than the fact that the Pilsudskis and Scheidemanns and Briands and MacDonalds are not only renegades but victims.

There is nothing more plain than the certainty of the threat of war so long as capitalism and its political form, nationalistic imperialism, remain on this globe. As John Strachey has pointed out, the Versailles Treaty was a monumental blunder of capitalism because it arbitrarily altered values which could not be altered. From a sane capitalist viewpoint it would have been infinitely better, because of their respective technological developments, to reverse the positions of Germany and France as to colonies. In an age of national self-sufficiency, Germany, with its highly developed industrial plant, cannot live without colonies. France, with its different economy, might very well survive without them. But France and Great Britain have colonies and Germany and Italy are driven to seek them. A temporary but common sense solution for capitalism would be for England and France to surrender some of their stolen possessions, but anyone who recalls the righteous uproar in London when it was revealed that Anthony Eden had attempted to forestall Mussolini's aggression in Ethiopia by the gift of a parcel of British colonial lands will hardly believe that friendship and sanity can ever overcome national greed and pride.

CAPITALISM has been good to many people. For the sake of discussion, let us assume it has been good to everybody. When everything favorable has been said for it, the conclusion remains that the contradictions of capitalism are making the ruin of mankind inevitable. It is no longer a matter of one nation oppressing another but of a final world conflict which will annihilate them all. If this seems extreme, let us confine our thinking to another World War which will be no more disastrous than the last World War. No sane person can face this prospect without terror and yet the certainty of the drive toward war is as fully established as a mathematical theorem. Such conjectures are no longer a matter of debate. Most of us have lived through one World War and its aftermath. The next would need be no more deadly to wreak injuries from which European civilization could never recover.

And war under capitalism is inevitable. There is no more possibility that capitalism can avert it than it was ever possible for capitalism to avert the last war. That it came in 1914 instead of 1907 or 1924 was a matter of detail. Whether it arises now out of the Ethiopian crisis or for some later cause is equally immaterial. Prior to 1914 there was the Agadir Crisis and the Bosnian Crisis. When these blew over there was a feeling that general wars were impossible in a civilized world. It was just as strongly felt that the Balkan Wars could have no effect outside their restricted area. The exacting analysis of Marx and Engels proving that by the very nature of capitalism a world conflict was inevitable was looked upon as the outmoded posturings of men who had long been discredited by the progress of civilization. But anyone who will study the diplomatic and economic forces active in prewar days will see that peace could not have been indefinitely prolonged. The pedants who seek to prove that the world would have been a different place for us all if only Kaiser Wilhelm or Sir Edward Grey had taken another sort of action at 2:13 on the afternoon of July 14, 1914, are as much beside the point as solemn editorials now on compromises, sanctions and the power of the great peace-loving peoples of the world. There will be no peace while capitalism remains.

Because of this one cardinal point, the world seems now to be taking part in some evil experience. There is a feeling of despair as one contemplates the childish little statesmen dashing from London to Geneva, from Rome to Paris, looking like nothing so much as helpless puppets jerked about by a drunken idiot. The pompous Mussolini mouthing his defiances on the borders of Northern Italy is nothing but a little boy, shouting to overcome his fear. The obsessed Hitler and the maniacal Goebbels with their cries against Bolshevism and their speeches filled with shrill screams of hate and impotence are symbols of a disease which is gnawing at humanity. What we are seeing is civilization, the sad European civilization of capitalist terror and hatred and cruelty, rushing to its doom.

WITH their world reeling stubbornly toward its end, there was one last masterly stroke — the fantastic and hideous spectacle of Mr. Rickett and his Standard Oil concessions in Ethiopia.

Such a stupendous spectacle could only have been arranged by some Master Showman intent on furnishing a climax of madness which might forever represent modern capitalistic civilization. Never in the history of mankind has there been such a colossal jest. The protestations of sanctity of the British, the smug righteousness of the French, the heaven-delivered mission of the Italians to rescue Ethiopia from their backward state—all jettisoned, all made ridiculous by the mystery man of oil representing capitalism at its height.

While Stanley Baldwin was finishing his vacation at Aix-les-Bains and Anthony Eden was coursing back and forth with his futile

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propositions for compromise—compromise which would hand Ethiopia over to Mussolini but save black Africa for Britain, the British Home Office was making public its new handbook on anti-gas precautions. The effect of the unemotional pages, said The New Statesman and Nation, was "to turn what had hitherto been an horrific fantasy into a close and appalling reality. It is as if people who had been brought up to believe vaguely in the Calvinist hell suddenly felt on their faces the flames from the pit which is bottomless."

> There is no defense. Matters are indeed far worse than the Home Office suggests, for, while it makes it clear that high explosive shells would accompany gas bombing, it omits to say what we are to do when various gases with opposite actions are used together, or used, as they will be, in conjunction with thermite, which can be dropped in bombs weighing only two pounds, each able to start a fire which cannot be extinguished by any means so far discovered. Nor does it make any mention of new gases which we know to be almost ready for use. . . . The ordinary householder's chief defense is to shut all his doors and windows and to make one room airtight. . . . We are told how many people can live in a gas-proof room of a certain size for twelve hours. We are not told what to do at the end of twelve hours if, as is probable, the other windows are broken and the district not yet freed from gas and gas contamination . . . for mustard gas and lewisite lie on the ground in liquid form and may continue to kill for several weeks after a raid. . . . If a concrete surface has been soaked with liquid mustard gas "it may be necessary to break up the surface and re-lay it." . . . The handbook makes no pretense that effective gas masks can be provided for more than a tiny fraction of the population. . . . Of all the deaths known to man, there are few more painful than death from mustard gas, though some of the new gases are said to produce an even more intense agony. . . . While Lord Londonderry, who has boasted of his efforts to prevent the abolition of aerial bombing, may successfully secure his own home in London against gas or retire into the comparative safety of his Durham estate, the mass of the population in poorer districts would be virtually helpless. Instead of wasting our time on precautions for the poor, it would be cheaper and more humane to make stocks of morphine available for those who prefer a gentler death. . . .

Separated by 3,000 miles of water, we may feel that America is safe from such horrors but the feeling is not shared by our own authorities. The gold vaults of the government have been moved from San Francisco to Denver and from New York to Kentucky. The ease with which Balbo brought the Italian air armada to the United States was as terrifying as the appearance of the German submarines off Newport during the World War.

THIS, then, is the destiny of capitalist civilization. These are the plans of the "civilized" world. The civilized world is made up of such ingredients as Italy, which saved Europe from Bolshevism; Germany, which saved Europe from Bolshevism; England, which saved the world from Bolshevism; and France, which saved Poland from Bolshevism and Rumania for Magda Lupescu.

I have no wish to taunt the honest people who have been thankful that civilization has been saved from the Red hordes. One can only stand aghast at their world's desire for death. They are our own people. If we scream at them to look where their precious civilization has brought them, it is only from a desire to save them. If we are appalled at the sight of Bishop Manning turning his pulpit over to Matthew Woll to denounce the American Communists, we are no less overwhelmed by the seemingly suicidal intent of the Roosevelt notes of protest to Russia. What malevolent genius is it which prompts this form of madness at a time when the world is tottering?

If prayer could keep the world alive, I should have no objection to prayer; but we have had 2,000 years of Christianity and there is no sane Christian who even contends that the power of the church is able to still the warlike forces of the world. If it were possible to arm so completely that no nation would dare attack another nation for fear of the cataclysmic effect upon them both, I should raise my voice for armament; but the most stupendous military establishments in the history of mankind are obviously heading only toward the annihilation of all nations. If combinations of great powers could be formed to keep the peace by main and ruthless force, there could be a basis for agreement even at the cost of tyranny triumphant; but there are no such combinations possible. Under capitalism there are no interests but the interests of aggrandizement; no such interests even if there were honest devoted people in power to desire them. Capitalism ethically guided is not capitalism but failure. Unless it is ruthless and realistic, it falls. It falls in any event when its opportunity for expansion is halted. It has been halted. The struggle for the few remaining unexploited areas makes war inevitable.

When Sir Samuel Hoare speaks at Geneva, he speaks not of cure but of delay. When Nicholas Murray Butler, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, spends his time denouncing Communism, he speaks as a man bereft of his mind. Where, in any of the sectors to which he appeals for help, does he see hope for mankind? If there is hope from anywhere but Communism, let him say where it is. The great civilized powers have saved civilization from Bolshevism. There remains now only the task of saving civilization from itself. Civilization! What a strange name for death and destruction. Is it Bolshevism which has brought the capitalistic powers to ruin? Do the Butlers and Hearsts say that it is the fault of Soviet Russia that 15,000,000 American workers are out of jobs? Do they contend that it is Stalin who is urging Mussolini to attack Ethiopia and bring the world down about his ears?

But we do not want to argue the merits of Communism. There is no time for that. There remains only the need of discussing life or death. We say only one thing and we say it to sceptics, God-fearing men and women, lords and ladies, blacks and whites and yellows, rich and poor. There is one hope in the world: Communism. Everything else has been tried and has failed. Other failures have not been final and deadly. This failure would mean the end of civilization as we know it.

Does anyone assume that Soviet Russia is a hundred times worse than its bitterest enemy claims to be? Despite such lies, it would still be the hope of the world. Does anyone believe that the people of the Soviet Union are exclusively beasts and villains and murderers? The charges against them could reach new heights of mendacity and viciousness and still they would be the hope of the world. If not Communism, what else? Name it!

WE say that a Soviet world would be a world of peace. We speak to the people of the world: It is not a question of whether we are friends or enemies. We don't ask you whether you are Christians or non-Christians. We ask you only if you want to live.

When you go to disaster, we may have to go with you, but as Marxists we shall not be driven like dumb animals to the slaughter. We ask only that you understand these forces before it is too late. Whatever happens there will be no end of Communism. There is a definite probability that the Soviet Union would survive a general conflagration. It is a huge country; it is owned by a union of peoples who have glimpsed what the future in a sane world can be and they will not surrender easily. It may survive intact and triumphant; it may survive in a reduced form; it may be brought down by the madness of the rest of humanity. But ideas do not necessarily disappear when nations disappear. Even if it is confined to the minds of a few men living on the remote and frozen wastes which are now being discovered by the Soviet adventurers in the North, the idea will carry on. It will carry on because there is no other idea possible of being carried on. Is there any mortal so demented as to wish to preserve the sacred fire of capitalism? The civilization which the good people speak of with such fervency is entirely in the hands of the Communists. If it cannot be saved by Communism, it is lost.

This is the ultimate. This is the truth, the final truth, the unescapable truth. But there are ways of fighting even the inevitable, ways of altering the world as it progresses to its end. For us here there is the practical need of fighting for our lives in such united-front groupings as the American League Against War and Fascism. It is a place where all can join who love life above destruction. Nothing is hopeless when there is an understanding of the obstacles and a tearing away of the black veils of obscurantism. We tell nobody that to fight against war they must fight immediately for the full Communist program. We ask them to fight for themselves.

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A Labor Party on the Way

CARL REEVE

FOR the first time in labor history, a state-wide referendum of trade-union members is to be held on the question of the Labor Party. This referendum, to begin in all Connecticut American Federation of Labor unions on November 1, will place before the workers of the state the question "Shall a Labor Party be Organized in the State of Connecticut?"

The poll was decided upon at the recent convention of the State Federation of Labor in Danbury. The man who led the Labor Party forces to victory, in the face of the opposition of old-line professional politicians was J. Nicholas Danz, then president of the Connecticut State Federation of Labor.

Behind Danz were one hundred progressive delegates who represented the demand of the majority of the membership of the A. F. of L. unions for the formation of a Labor Party in the state.

As Danz himself said, the progressive forces "came out of the convention with a hatful." Although a conservative slate was elected, the progressive candidate for president received 96 votes. The resolutions for industrial unionism, organization of the unorganized, for real unemployment insurance, for prevailing union wages on work relief, against Nazism, war and fascism, were carried.

Most important of the decisions, was the motion for the Labor Party referendum. In the end, even the conservative forces dared not openly oppose the carrying through of this referendum.

Danz, in his report to the convention, declared that the policy of rewarding friends in the two major political parties was outworn. Labor must have a party of its own, he said, and the most momentous questions facing the Connecticut workers are the organization of the unorganized workers on an industrial basis and the formation of a Labor Party.

Danz is a heavy-set man, with clear, piercing eyes. He is frank and outspoken, impatient of trickery and subterfuge. Danz has a record and reputation among the workers of Connecticut as a highly efficient organizer, a man whose word can be depended upon.

He has been a member of the American Federation of Labor for twenty-eight years. When he was sixteen years old he joined the American Federation of Musicians. Today, at forty-four, he is still a member of that organization. Danz was born in New Haven. His father was Swiss, his mother Irish. His father, Frederick C. Danz, was an active trade unionist in the Molders Union in New Haven, years ago. An uncle, Frank Horan, for years a member of the Electricians' Union, was president of the New Haven Trades Council of the A. F. of L. In 1914 Danz moved to New London where for seven years he has been president of the Central Labor Union. He is now that body's secretary. Danz is also chairman of the executive board of the Musicians' Union, local 285 at New London.

For years Danz' activities have been wider than his work in the Musicians' Union. He has helped the buildings-trades unions as an organizer. In 1933 he was drafted by the United Textile Workers to help in the organizing work and he soon became Connecticut State organizer. Danz was president of the Connecticut State Federation of Labor until the recent convention. He declined to run for re-election, supporting the progressive slate, which was headed by George Moffatt.

I MOTORED up to New London, in the Eastern corner of the state, from New Haven with the Connecticut representative of THE NEW MASSES, to see the man who is leading the fight in the trade unions of the state for the formation of a Labor Party. He lives in a navy-yard town. Sailors, police, with white S. P.'s on their blue uniforms, parade the streets carrying long wooden clubs. Newly-recruited sailors, in training in New London, walk in and out of beer halls or congregate around the town's movie. New London is also an industrial town. Submarines are made in the shipyards. Textile towns such as Norwich and Bridgeport are clustered around New London.

"What first brought to your mind the need for a Labor Party in Connecticut?" I asked him.

"I was taken in by Roosevelt along with a good many others," Danz replied. "I thought Roosevelt really meant what he said. I thought he would take care of the forgotten man. I believed in the N.R.A. But I was taken in like everybody else. I saw that the N.R.A. didn't bring shorter hours and higher wages. Then came the Supreme Court decision killing the whole N.R.A. And another thing that made me decide for a Labor Party was when I saw what a deal the textile workers were given in the general textile strike. They carried out Roosevelt's wishes and went back to work and didn't get a thing.

"Now the workers have the slimmest pay envelope they've had in the last thirty-five years. The building trades in Connecticut are at a complete standstill. Among forty thousand textile workers in the state there is widespread unemployment. The Labor Party movement is the only means of staving off fascism. Hoover promised a chicken in every pot. Roosevelt made a lot of promises he didn't keep. We've been see-sawing back and forth from one major party to another. Today all we find among the workers is distress."

Dan himself had to give his house back to the bank a year ago because he couldn't keep up payment.

"What do you think a Labor Party can accomplish in the state?"

"The Labor Party can fight for a program of genuine social legislation and win it. The old-age pension bill passed by the last session of the state legislature is a joke to me. It gives nothing to a worn-out worker until he is sixty-five. The Bible only gives a man three-score years and ten of life. But today the employer throws the worker on the scrap heap when he is forty. The Labor Party would put forward a real old-age pension bill, with the age limit fifty-five or less. And the money wouldn't be raised by a head tax or sales tax placing the burden on the workers and farmers."

The present old-age pension law, which is hailed by the conservative politicians in the Executive Board of the State Federation as a great achievement, gives the sixty-five-year-old worker nothing unless he is destitute and provides funds by a head tax on all those in the state (except veterans) above twenty-one years of age.

"The Labor Party would fight for real unemployment insurance and for the prevailing union wage on work relief. We would try to get unemployment insurance paid for by a tax on high incomes and on corporation profits. We don't want the cost of unemployment insurance to be kicked back on the workers' shoulders in the form of sales and head taxes."

DANZ backed a resolution in the State Federation of Labor convention which called for a special session of the state legislature to pass such a bill. No one dared openly to take a definite stand against this resolution.

"The Labor Party will work to get the Injunction Law repealed," Danz went on to say.

It seems there is not only no anti-injunction law in the state, but there is an old law under which injunctions can be issued prohibiting picketing.

"I went to a hearing of the state legislature and I heard a representative of the employers say that there was no need for this law to be repealed as it is never used. I got up and said that it was used against me twice. I was served with an anti-picketing injunction under this law in a strike

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in Jewett City only a few months ago. But the legislators of the two old parties didn't repeal the law.

"The Labor Party will not only try to abolish injunctions. But we will demand that all militia, state police, hired thugs and other armed forces cannot be used against strikers. Unless, of course, they give the workers the same right. Let them give the workers the right to bring in armed forces against the employers when the employers fire union men or cut wages or bring in a company union or increase hours.

"But try and get that right for the workers," Danz added dryly.

"Who should be admitted to the Labor Party?"

"Every person in the state of voting age. The Labor Party should include farmers, white-collar workers, professional people and the small business men as well as the workers."

"What about the Red scare being raised by The Craftsman in attacking the Labor Party?"

The Craftsman is a privately-owned sheet published in Hartford by a young man named Jack Elliott, who draws his inspiration from Hearst. John Egan, conservative secretary of the State Federation, is Associate Editor and the paper is endorsed by the Federation. Its September issue ran a "Red scare" against the Labor Party, charging that the Labor Party movement in Connecticut was a "Communist plot."

"Twenty-five years ago anybody who had progressive ideas was called a socialist or an anarchist," Dan answered. "Today a new word has been coined, 'Reds.' However, these so called 'Reds' denounced by The Craftsman for supporting a Labor Party and other progressive measures, seem to be the very ones who are bringing forward policies which are of benefit to the workers. The 'Red scare' is being used to try to head off the sentiment for a Labor Party."

DANZ describes himself as an "independent." His last vote was cast for Roosevelt.

The demand for a Labor Party comes from thousands of Connecticut workers, who, like Danz, have been disillusioned with Roosevelt, who have seen that the Democratic and Republican parties were breaking strikes while the workers' pocketbooks have continued to remain empty.

On June 30, on the initiative of leaders of the Hartford Central Labor Union, a conference for a Labor Party was held at Hartford, at which representatives of over 150 A.F. of L locals, elected by their membership, attended. Forty-one thousand trade unionists were represented, with 165 delegates from 31 Connecticut cities.

The Republican and Democratic politicians who were entrenched in the leadership of the Connecticut State Federation of Labor became alarmed. These politicians include Mayor Murphy, old-guard Democratic mayor of New Haven, a vice-president of the State Federation and Thomas Shea, a Democratic legislator, now president of the Federation. Egan, himself a Republican, cooperates with the conservative Democratic machine. The big utility companies of the state control both parties and this fact has become quite generally known.

After Danz, then president of the State Federation of Labor, attended this conference as a member of the New London Central Labor Union and urged the formation of a Labor Party, he began to receive the attention of William Green.

Green wrote Danz on August 15, declaring that "the American Federation of Labor has thus far refused to approve the creation of an independent Labor Party." After scolding Danz, Green demanded a full report.

Danz's reply on August 9 contained the following words:

> I believe it is my constitutional right as an individual to voice my opinion on any subject and with twenty-eight years experience in the labor movement one of my opinions is that the workers' only salvation is in unionism and a labor party. This I shall continue to advocate.

Green wrote back on August 25. Danz's reply, he said, "is altogether unsatisfactory." Green added: "It is my opinion that you should either resign as president of the Connecticut State Federation of Labor or withdraw from any activity in the formation of an independent political party."

I asked Danz whether there is any law on the books of the A.F. of L. in which the advocacy of a Labor Party is in any way prohibited.

"Of course not," Danz replied. "We have state and local autonomy on such questions in the A. F. of L. I would like to know whether it isn't 'outside' activity for William Green to come to the New York State Federation of Labor and indorse the candidacy of the Democratic Governor Lehman. Isn't it 'outside' activity for Green to go around campaigning for Roosevelt and the Democratic Party nationally. If Green can advocate election of Democrats, why can't trade unionists advocate a Labor Party? I would like to know from William Green just how it is a violation of A. F. of L. policies to advocate a Labor Party based on the A. F. of L. unions."

"Do you think the Labor Party question will come up at the A. F. of L. national convention in October?"

"Yes. On October 7 the 55th Annual Convention of the A. F. of L. takes place in Atlantic City. And what is the situation? The workers are worse off than they have ever been in the past fifty-five years. For fifty-five years we have had a policy of reliance on the two old major political parties. There's been a slip-up somewhere. Isn't it time for the A. F. of L. nationally to try something new? Are we to go on for another fifty-five years waiting for the two major parties to give us the social legislation we want and always being disappointed? For fifty-five years the two old parties have been making promises to the workers and breaking them. Isn't it time for the workers to have a party of their own—an independent Labor Party?"

Over one hundred letters have come to Danz in the few days since the state federation convention, pledging support to the Labor Party campaign. He calls them his "fan mail."

NOT only in Connecticut are the workers and farmers pressing for the organization of a Labor Party. Throughout the country the sentiment is steadily growing for the organization of a party independent of the employers' influence. In New Jersey, although the conservative machine in leadership steamrollered the Labor Party resolution to defeat, the Labor Party has the support of the membership. The state building-trades council, three Central Labor bodies and numerous local unions have endorsed the Labor Party movement. Twenty-nine resolutions for a Labor Party were introduced into the convention, held last week in Atlantic City. The resolution for a Labor Party received a tremendous ovation from the floor of the convention. It was defeated only because president Marciane, violating parliamentary procedure, refused to take a roll-call vote.

In Chicago, members of 63 unions affiliated to the A. F. of L. and the railroad brotherhoods have voted for the formation of a Labor Party. In Springfield, Mass., a Labor Party slate, backed by the A. F. of L. unions, is in the field. A Labor Party ticket is also running in Paterson, N. J. The Oregon State Federation of Labor passed a motion at its convention last month in favor of a Labor Party. Throughout the country hundreds of local unions and city central bodies have demanded a break with the ancient policy of "rewarding friends and punishing enemies," within the two major political parties.

The Connecticut unions, by taking a vote in some 500 A. F. of L. locals, will bring before large numbers of workers the message that the Labor Party is on the way to become a reality.

"The principal task now of those advocating a Labor Party," Danz declared, "is to bring the referendum to the attention of all local unions and of all union members. Certainly we cannot expect such Democratic office holders as Shea and Murphy to favor a Labor Party. It is up to all the members of the unions who favor the Labor Party to become active in the referendum, so that the will of the membership is expressed. I am sure that if we are on the alert, the large majority of the A. F. of L. membership will vote for the Labor Party in the coming referendum."

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Letters from America

Alabama's Blood-Smeared Cotton

"YOUR time has come, you black — — ——!" screeched through the woods surrounding Ed Bracy's home. A few seconds later the gang of vigilantes broke into the house and shot him nineteen times in the neck and head. This was the second killing during the Cotton Pickers Strike. It happened on Labor Day.

Ed Bracy, militant Negro leader of the Share Croppers Union, around Hope Hill, had continued to lead the masses of strikers in spite of terror and murder threats. Sheriff R. E. Woodruff's vigilante gang sneaked in at night, like the cowards they are, to murder another leader. The masses have already answered this attack on leaders—"We are all leaders and we will fight on to victory," they say. Since August 19, through the most vicious terror the landlords could unleash, the strikers have held their ranks solid. Such determination can only be born of dire poverty, starvation and oppression.

The terror drive continues. As I write this, there is a look-out to warn me of the approach of lynchers. Constant vigil is kept at all times. Sleep is tortured with nightmares of lynching, terror and murder. Food settles in lumps in your stomach. But the struggle must go on! The attack of the lynchers must be answered!

On August 22 they murdered Jim Press Meriwether, a Negro strike leader near Sandy Ridge. He walked by the home of Bennie Calloway, another striker, where Sheriff Woodruff's gang was beating the women. John Frank Bates, a Fort Deposit landlord, shot him down without a word. They found Jim's wife, beat her and hanged her from the rafters of the house for awhile before releasing her. Then they carried Jim to C. C. Ryles' plantation to question him. Getting no information from the dying man, they carried him out on a hillside and riddled his body with bullets.

Night riders, carrying Negro strikers out from their beds to beat them almost to death and throw them in the swamps. No sleep, no rest, but always watching for the terror gang. More than six strikers were carried out to be beaten. Some of them were unable to wear clothes on their back because of their wounds.

The search is hottest for me. Charles Tasker and James Jackson, Negro workers of Montgomery, were arrested on August 30. They were questioned continually about where I am. Later an I.L.D. lawyer secured their release. Detective Moseley carried them to the county line and told them to "Keep going and never come back!" They are forced to leave their homes and families.

The strike spreads. Montgomery, Talapoosa, Chambers, Lee and Randolph Counties are out solid now. The masses are willing to struggle, willing to sacrifice.

The small demands of the strike—$1 a hundred for picking cotton, $1 for 10 hours' work for wage hands, 20 cents an hour, 40 hours a week with pay in cash for relief workers—are more than 100 percent above the present rates, a grim testimony to the starvation conditions existing in the farming sections of the South. To maintain these conditions the landlords murder, terrorize and beat the strikers. The ugly head of fascism is rearing up in Dixie, in the "Cradle of the Confederacy."

Strikers hide out in swamps in the daytime to avoid attacks of the vigilante gangs. The night Jim Meriwether was killed the strikers got their guns and waited for another vigilante attack. When the lynchers arrived the strikers sounded the battle cry, it was to be steel for steel on even terms. The lynchers, cowards at heart, turned and ran before a shot was fired.

In the meantime, the landlords are beginning to crack. In lower Montgomery County a landlord is paying his hands $1 a day. In Reeltown, scene of the heroic Reeltown struggle of 1932, the landlords agreed to pay 75 cents a hundred and two meals for picking cotton. Around Dadeville and other parts of Talapoosa County the price is rising, but the masses refuse to pick for less than their demands. Only the small farmers, tenants and croppers who pick their own cotton are carrying anything to the gin. The landlords' fields are heavy with cotton that has been ready to pick for three weeks. On J. R. Bell's plantation in Lowndes County, the strikers say "$1 a hundred or let the cows eat it."

In the meantime, the Share Croppers Union waits word from the Southern Tenant Farmers Union on the question of amalgamation. Now more than ever before the necessity for one powerful union in the cotton fields rings out. The murder and terror drive of the landlords is a clarion call for unity, for a powerful united struggle against the fascist attacks of the landlords and for raising the miserably low living standards of the southern rural masses.

In spite of all the odds, the strike goes on. It is historic, it is the greatest strike movement the landlords have ever witnessed. It is significant to all labor, it is raising the miserably low-wage standard on which Roosevelt based his wage-smashing Relief Wage Scale. It loosens the spirit of the Negro masses; they are struggling to the bitter end for their rights. It is imperative to America, it is battering down the ugly head of fascism in the "Cradle of American Fascism."

ALBERT JACKSON.
Secretary, Share Croppers Union.

Law and Order in Kansas City

IT WAS nearly midnight. I was walking alone along a Kansas City, Mo., street. A car drew up ahead of me, two men stepped out and, as I came alongside, halted me.

"Where you going, Bud?" asked one, and the other "Where you been? What you got here?" and he seized my brief case.

I was bewildered, could scarcely speak, tried to push them aside, demanding "What is this?"

"We'll damn soon show you what this is, you damn Communist," and with that they shoved me into the car.

I protested that I was not a Communist. "You know goddamn well you are," the one in the front seat shouted and, turning, struck me twice across the head with a blackjack.

"Where you from?" asked the other.

"New York."

"What the hell you doing out here?"

"Making a survey of the drought area in Kansas."

"What for?"

"For a play."

When I continued to protest at their actions, the one in the front seat turned: "When I get you down to the station, I'm gonna give you a working over. We're gonna clean all you —— Communists out of town in thirty days," he shouted, blowing alcoholic breath in my face.

We drew up to the station. I was marched inside and searched. In my brief case were a few copies of The Farmers' Weekly, a pamphlet *What Is Socialism*, a booklet *Drouth* and my notes, the result of two months' effort in the drought areas. All personal belongings, including my notes and $19.18 in cash, were taken from me. While this was being done, the larger of the two detectives—Reddish was his name—was making advances towards an attractive girl who had just been brought in. She told him that she didn't know him, but he forced his attentions with lewd gestures. The boy who was typing my name turned to him. "What you got this man here for?" Reddish stammered something about "suspected Communist activities."

Reddish led me into a side room, drew a

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curtain, seized a hose. His lips were tightly pressed and he snarled: "How you like that?" and caught me across the head. When I held up my arms to defend myself, he struck me across the body and then across the legs, shouting "You goddamn Communist." The marks of the hose are still on my body two weeks later as I write this.

He and Hanson, the other detective, then booked me with the police department. I reiterated that I had intended to leave for New York the next day. "You'll leave for New York all right, but not tomorrow. You'll stick around here for a while first." I asked to use the telephone. "The telephone? Who the hell you think you are, you damn Communist?" I was turned over to two turnkeys, taken to the elevator, lowered three stories, fingerprinted. Steel doors opened. I was shown to a cell and the bars clanged behind me.

All this had happened so suddenly that I could scarcely believe my senses. I had just come from the home of a member of the American Workers Union. This man had been most helpful to me before I entered the drought area, suggesting points to visit, and I had stopped to thank him for his help before returning to New York. Furthermore, I am not a Communist but a registered member of the Democratic Party in New York City. "And suppose I were a Communist?" I asked myself. "What of it?" However, here I was, born in Nebraska, living there until I was ten, living in the state of Washington for the next fourteen years, subsequently doing a year's graduate work at Harvard, and then coming to New York, where I have been employed almost continuously ever since. Still, all this apparently meant nothing to the "Law." I had found that it is not safe for an American citizen to walk the streets of an American city. "After all," I asked myself, "am I in America or in Germany?"

Next morning we lined up for the "show-up." My turn came. The door opened and I was shoved upon a small platform with footlights and border lights blinding me. Across the footlights I could see one face brightly illuminated. I was vaguely conscious of others out ahead—of shadowy faces through a thin screen. The face droned: "Ever been arrested before?"

"No, sir."

"Never?"

"Never."

"Where are you staying?"

"I have no headquarters. I just reached here yesterday afternoon and hadn't yet found a hotel for the night."

"You are on your way back to New York?"

"Yes."

"Got enough money to get you there?"

"Yes."

I was taken downstairs again. Soon I was sent for and a bondsman tried to shake me down. "I can get you out of here for $25."

I refused to have anything to do with him. He tried pressure: "You know even when they release you, that doesn't mean anything. They might pick you up while you're going out the door and throw you in again." I had heard from other prisoners that this actually happened.

When he finally gave me up and left, smiling rather cynically, I asked again to use the telephone but was refused. Then downstairs again and into a cell with a Filipino, about 27, arrested on a charge of defrauding the American Railway Express. He had been there several days and, as the day wore on, kept muttering to himself, "I'm worried." He was on the lower bunk and, stretched out above him, I could feel every move he made. During the day from time to time, I paced the cell, three short paces forward and back, forward and back. So far and no farther. At first I walked quickly, found my nerves getting more and more on edge, said to myself: "Take it easy now. Don't let this get the best of you. Easy now. Slower." And I gradually got myself under control. Confinement is difficult enough for anyone, but it was especially difficult for me as I had been walking fifteen miles a day often during the last two months and been living a most active life.

About seven that evening, while I was stretched on my bunk, the Filipino gave one of his periodic bangs on his bunk. I jumped to the floor and shouted to one of the prisoners who was allowed to walk between the cells: "I've got to get out of here. I tell you I must get out of this cell." While I gripped the bars, he talked to me: "Take it easy now. I'll talk to the turnkey when he comes and see if anything can be done." It was possible to arrange with a turnkey to walk between the cells during his eight-hour shift by giving him a dollar. A little later, when he came, I found it was too late to do anything. I must make the best of things until morning. I turned my attention to the Filipino, soon had him talking about his native islands and, in so doing, I gradually got my nerves as well as his under control.

To one who has never experienced confinement it will be difficult to appreciate the feelings I have just described. For a time I thought that I would lose my mind. Ocassionally that does happen to prisoners. While I was confined, now and then during the night hours or a lull in the prisoners' talking, some poor fellow would let out a shrill squeal and the other prisoners would look at each other questioningly.

During my confinement I learned of unbelievable brutality. One prisoner was taken from his cell on three successive nights and beaten for nearly three hours each night. At times a man is taken "to the river" for these beatings and dies as a result. Such methods of terror and brutality are practised with almost a free hand upon invesigation prisoners as there is no way for them to communicate with the outside world. If the authorities decide they have no case against a man, they generally do not release him until the marks of their inhuman beatings are gone.

Graft pervades the whole set up. Even the turnkeys get their rake-off from prisoners who happen to have any money. As prisoners are fed only two sandwiches at 11:30 and two at 4:30 they do at times want more to eat. The turnkeys, very obligingly, will bring in five-cent sandwiches for fifteen cents; a five-cent cut of pie for the same price; a ten-cent bottle of coffee for twenty-five cents. Cigarettes are twenty-five cents and a five-cent bag of tobacco, ten cents.

Legally, I could be confined only forty-eight hours. However, I was confined nearly five days, 113 hours to be exact, refused advice of counsel and denied the right even to make a telephone call. But my case was not unusual. Often prisoners are confined six or eight days. While I was confined, one prisoner had been there eighteen days and another twenty with no chance to communicate with the outside. When I was released my notes were not returned and the detectives gave me just two hours to get out of town, saying: "If we pick you up again, it's gonna be your ass this time, you goddamn Communist."

LOWELL C. CHAMBERLAIN.

Rain On Our Hands

Now are the old faiths gone: what have we left?
No longer the coin's glitter, the solid weight in our fingers,
The thin, the fragile strength of ancient faith.

We have turned fields, we have watched the gold miracle of
grain lie wasted.
Having seen the white bloom of cotton swollen in the sun,
We have not turned our futile hands.

Now, unmoved, we have looked on the tall cities over us.
Now is the hunger and the stir of throngs gone out of us.
Now are the old faiths gone: what have we left?
What have we other than these:
Ultimate earth
A final sky
Rain on our hands?

GLADYS LA FLAMME

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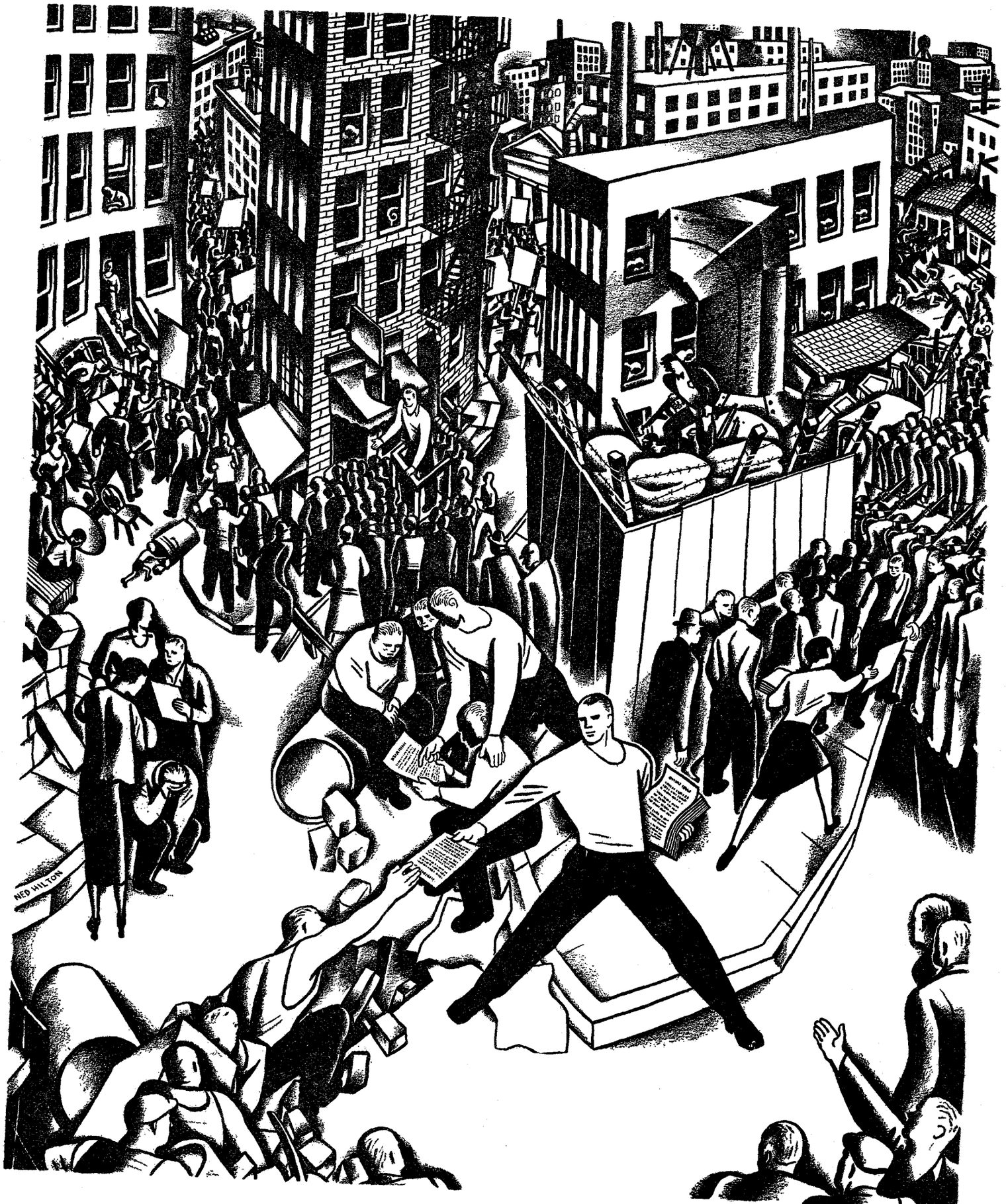

THE HANDBILL

Ned Hilton

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Last in Peace, Last in War

LOREN MILLER

ALLIED and German armies were locked in the decisive battle of the world war when the French Military Mission attached to the American high command issued "Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops." Dated August 7, 1918, the bulletin was distributed to French military and civil officials and outlined race relations in the United States. It went on to say that the "Negro is regarded by the white American as an inferior" and that the "vices of the Negro are a constant menace to the American who has to repress them sternly." French officers were told to avoid eating or shaking hands with Negro officers and were warned to be careful about citing Negro troops for bravery. The tenor of the bulletin was that Negro men had a predilection for white women and that they were inferiors who would be spoiled by too much attention. It was evident, even before the French disavowed responsibility, that the sentiments were those of the American General Staff. Nor was there any occasion for surprise; the bulletin was in the very best American military tradition.

The army has had a long experience with Negro troops; at least six thousand of them served with colonial forces in the revolutionary struggle with England. A Negro, Crispus Attucks, was the first to fall in that little band that precipitated the Boston Massacre, a group sneered at by John Adams as a "rabble of saucy boys, Negroes, mulattoes, etc." There were a half million Negro slaves in the colonies and England made a determined effort to enlist them on her side. The war had hardly begun before Lord Dunmore issued an order promising freedom to all slaves who joined loyalist forces. Negroes flocked to the English army and the colonials were thrown into panic. George Washington called Dunmore that "arch traitor to the rights of humanity." But the English appeal brought the colonists to their senses and they rescinded orders forbidding enlistment of Negroes.

The status of Negroes in the revolutionary armies was nebulous. Some of them were deserters from plantations always liable to be sent back to servitude — Washington himself found time to aid in slave catching in his army. Some were free men and still other black soldiers remained slaves while their masters drew interest on their value during service. By the time the war ended there were Negro soldiers in every colonial army and there are many Negro women eligible for membership in the D.A.R., although one shudders to think what would happen if they applied. Despite vague promises American Negro soldiers were returned to slavery and one of the provisions of the Treaty of Ghent provided (among other things) for the "return of slaves and other property" England took.

Admiral Perry thought highly of Negro sailors who served under him in the war of 1812 and observed that while "America has such tars she has little to fear from tyrants of the ocean." Faced with superior forces at New Orleans, Andrew Jackson issued a frantic appeal to Louisiana Negroes telling them that "as sons of freedom you are now called upon to defend our most inestimable blessings. As Americans your country looks with confidence to her adopted children." New Orleans Negroes helped him out but when the war ended the United States did nothing to help free Negroes whom the thrifty Britishers had captured and sold into slavery in the West Indies. Jackson enhanced his military reputation by leading slave-catching expeditions into Spanish Florida.

The Civil War was looked upon as a white man's war in the beginning and Negroes were denied the right to enlist. Slaves who fled from their masters were sent back to the plantations and Lincoln himself revoked some of the early military proclamations of freedom in invaded areas. But as the war wore on it became apparent that the use of Negro troops was necessary to insure victory. The early policy was revoked in 1863, almost 200,000 Negroes joined union forces but until 1864 they received only seven dollars a month in comparison to thirteen dollars paid white soldiers. Some historians believe that Negroes tipped the scales in favor of the North in the conflict; certainly they played their part in winning their own freedom and preserving the union. The story of reconstruction and what happened to the Negro people requires no comment.

Negroes participated in the Spanish-American war as free citizens and several regiments saw service in Cuba where one detachment won fame by saving Theodore Roosevelt when he led his Rough Riders in a foolish and impetuous assault on San Juan hill. With the praise of the country ringing in their ears, Negro soldiers returned to the United States. On its way home one regiment was quartered in Huntsville, Alabama. Townspeople accused the victorious heroes of being too "uppity" and a riot broke out in which four soldiers lost their lives.

By the turn of the century America's policy in regard to Negroes in military service was fairly well settled. A limited number was permitted to enlist in separate detachments in the infantry and cavalry. With few exceptions ranking officers were white while Negroes held non-commissioned posts. The first Negro entered West Point in 1870 and since that time fourteen others have been admitted to the military academy. Only three have graduated and received commissions in the regular army, the last one in 1889. It goes without saying that Negro officers are never placed at the head of white soldiers.

NEGROES have not served in the navy since reconstruction days except as mess attendants and servants. None of three Negroes who attended the naval academy graduated. Back of the exclusion of Negroes from the navy lies the fact that American military authorities do not want Negroes in the first line of defense, the position long held by the navy. Now that mechanized branches, such as chemical warfare, tank corps and the like, have become vital they too exclude Negroes. The air service is even more exclusive than the navy; a Negro applicant was told last year that "no provisions have been made or *contemplated* for such training."

There is a mixture of contempt and distrust in the refusal to train Negro officers and in the exclusion of Negroes from all but subordinate branches of the military forces; contempt because the Negro is still popularly regarded as an inferior and distrust because there is fear that armed Negroes will remember the conditions to which they are subject as civilians. Indeed, the Negro does not escape insult and discrimination by putting on the uniform, a circumstance that led to the famous Brownsville, Texas, incident. In 1906, a Negro infantry regiment was ordered to the Texas city on its return from the Philippines. City officials protested the order bitterly and when the troops got there they were subjected to every insult that a southern community can heap on Negroes.

On the night of August 13 a barkeep was killed and a particularly vicious lieutenant of police was wounded during a wild shooting spree in which a section of Brownsville was riddled with bullets. The white brigadier general in command charged that nine Negro soldiers had done the shooting. But not a word, except defiant denial, could be wrung from the soldiers. Enraged officials asserted that a few soldiers had been detailed the job of shooting while the rest were pledged to silence. President Roosevelt stormed and discharged 156 men without honor but if the soldiers knew what had happened they never told. Perhaps for reasons of policy, Negroes have always contended that the shooting was not done by the soldiers. Certainly there was provocation enough and if there was a conspiracy of silence it was one of the most magnificent examples of solidarity ever seen.

The Brownsville incident excited Negro people for years and it was still a live issue at the time of the world war. There were other reasons why Negroes were not enthusiastic about the war. With the exception of a few favored colonials all people of African

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descent hate England because of her imperialism in Africa. Nor was there much sympathy for Poor Little Belgium. No ruler has ever piled up the atrocity record that Leopold did when, as king of the Belgians, he pacified the Congo. On the other hand a number of German exiles of 1848, particularly Carl Schurz, played a large part in marshaling anti-slavery sentiment during the Civil War. Then, too, Negroes were not enamored of the task of making the world safe for democracy while they were disfranchised in the South and without representation in the North.

Fifty-five Negroes were lynched in 1916, adding to Negro discontent. Another circumstance that same year added fuel to the fire. Pershing took Negro soldiers in the famous, and futile, chase after Villa into the interior of Mexico. Four were killed in an engagement in which American forces were defeated at Carrizal. Controversies sprang up. On one hand Negro soldiers were accused of lack of courage and on the other white opponents of Wilson's policy referred sneeringly to the anomoly of black soldiers warring on a friendly nation. Of course, the Negro people were not to blame for the policy but they had to bear the opprobrium. At the height of the controversy, W. E. B. Du Bois, then editor of The Crisis magazine, referred in slighting terms to the fact that Negro soldiers were being used to pull other people's chestnuts out of the fire and observed that "one of these days black men are going to learn to fight for themselves."

The same thought had occurred to those who were driving the nation into war. Something had to be done. The man on whose shoulders rests the major responsibility for the fairly successful effort to enlist Negro support for the world war is, curiously enough, Du Bois. At that time he was the foremost Negro scholar in America. He was not only editor of The Crisis magazine but the real leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. More than that, he was outspoken and militant and, ostensibly, an opponent of war. As late as September, 1916, he was holding up Sir Roger Casement, Irish rebel, as an example for Negroes. In November, he supported Allan Benson, the Socialist nominee, for president.

That winter the drive toward war was intensified and Joel and Arthur Spingarn, men who gave both guidance and money to the N.A.A.C.P., began to dabble with dreams of military greatness. Du Bois vacillated, wrote stinging editorials sneering at American and Allied hypocrisy — and then capitulated. The first definite sign of his weakening came when he gave support to the Spingarn plan for separate officers' training camps for Negroes. He argued that war was bound to come, advanced a tacit plea for Negro support and urged Negroes to be prepared to furnish trained officers.

WHEN war was finally declared, Du Bois was one of the main cogs in the military machine. He wrote the platform on which a group of public figures meeting in Washington agreed to support the war. To the vast army of Crisis readers he cried: "War! It is an awful thing! It is hell! . . . Bad as it is, slavery is worse; the rape of Belgium is worse." His unceasing work and his lyric appeals to the martial spirit helped mightily; soon Negro intellectuals were flag-waving with the best of them. The government did its part, too; vague and lofty promises were made to remedy (after the war, of course) the ills about which Negroes complained. Emmett Scott, a Negro educator, became an assistant to the secretary of war and George E. Haynes left the Urban League to take a position in the Department of Labor.

Although these, and other, Negro leaders assured America that her black stepsons yearned to fight for her, Southerners weren't so sure. They shuddered at the prospect of armed Negroes. Senator Verdaman arose to warn the Senate that "universal military service means that millions of Negroes . . . will be armed. I know of no greater menace to the South." All over that section voices were raised in fear and warning. Proposals were even made to exempt Negroes from the draft and in the spirit of the times Du Bois denounced such plans as a German plot. The result was a practical compromise.

Negroes were made subject to the draft along with others. In fact, they were herded into the army wholesale without regard to exemption claims or dependents. In the first draft ten percent more of the Negroes called were certified for service than white. But these Negroes were not called for combat service; most of them were placed in the Service of Supply, that is, in labor detachments. Many of them never drilled except with wooden guns. Of the 200,000 Negro soldiers who went to France more than three-fourths were in labor battalions.

Negro opposition to the war never entirely died out. A series of incidents fanned it to flame on several occasions. The first was the East St. Louis race riot of July, 1917, a riot provoked by the importation of unskilled Negro workers from the South in an effort to keep wages down. There had been preliminary riots in May when an appeal for aid from troops stationed there to protect private property against strikers was refused. The July riot raged for three days and 200 Negro men, women and children were killed. Officials failed to punish those responsible and spent their time prosecuting Negroes who had the effrontery to defend themselves. The government contented itself with the appointment of an investigating commission.

Negro protest over the riot was still raging when Negro soldiers stationed near Houston, Texas, revolted against a reign of police brutality and met city policemen in what amounted to a military engagement. Police officers began badgering Negro civilians and soldiers as soon as the detachment arrived at Houston. On August 23, 1917, two of the most vicious of these officers beat up a Negro woman. A Negro soldier intervened; he received the same treatment. When a Negro officer arrived and inquired into the trouble policemen set upon him too.

Negro soldiers were stationed a few miles from the city and when they got word of what had happened they broke into the armory, took guns and marched in military formation on the city. Their objective was the police station. When civilians tried to interfere the soldiers shot their way through. Seventeen white persons fell in the engagement, among them the police lieutenant mainly responsible for the trouble.

War Department officials were panic stricken; here was open rebellion and the war was only a few months old. Moreover, the Houston soldiers were not raw recruits; they were seasoned veterans of the regular army. Punishment was swift and certain. Thirteen soldiers were hanged almost immediately, five others got death sentences, fifty-one were given life imprisonment and five more got shorter terms. A wave of resentment swept over the country as Negroes contrasted the action at Houston with government impotence at East St. Louis. Even white newspapers advised caution and the War Department was forced to issue an order calling for review of similar cases in the future. Nothing could shake Du Bois' support of the war. He wrote a long editorial mourning the death of the Houston soldiers and ended by saying: "We ask no mitigation of their punishment. They broke the law. They must suffer." Obsequiousness could go no further.

The soldiers who had been punished at Houston took their places in Negro life as the Houston Martyrs. There were flare-ups at other training camps. The War Department created more trouble by placing white southern officers over Negro soldiers under the theory that such officers knew how to control Negroes. Negro soldiers in the Service of Supply were treated as if they were still peons on southern plantations. Service Y.M.C.A. huts followed Jim-Crow practices. The Red Cross rejected Negro nurses. A Negro regiment bound for France was ordered off the battleship, Virginia, because, the captain said, Negroes had never been transported on a battleship. In some cases Negro officers arriving in France were sent to quarters in unfinished barracks while white fellow officers were quartered in hotels. White soldiers were encouraged to refuse to salute Negro officers while commanding generals in France embarked on a well-planned campaign to villify their Negro troops. General Ballou referred to his Negro division as the "rapist division" and General Erwin issued an order commanding his Negro soldiers not to associate with French women.

Negro officers were court martialled and demoted on the slightest pretexts. Several attempts were made to dismiss Negro officers in a wholesale fashion. Meanwhile, Colonel Charles Young, the highest ranking Negro officer, was being treated in a shameless manner. The expansion of the army to war-time strength should have brought him a promotion to at least the rank of brigadier general but instead he was given the run-around for

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months and then retired on the excuse that he was unfit for active service. He became a pathetic figure and rode on horseback from Ohio to Washington to prove his fitness. To the bitter end he exhorted Negroes to support the war.[1]

FORTY-FOUR Negroes were lynched in 1917; fifty-five Negro men and women were victims of mob violence in 1918. Stories of discrimination against Negro soldiers in France began to trickle back home. The Negro people were in a ferment of discontent. President Wilson tried to check their rising opposition by restoring some of the Brownsville soldiers to their posts and followed that action by officially condemning lynching in the summer of 1918. Another conference of Negro public figures was summoned in Washington. In the July, 1918, issue of The Crisis, Du Bois wrote what is perhaps the most famous — and one of the most amazing — editorials ever published in the Negro press when he issued an appeal for Negroes to continue support of the war. "Let us, while this war lasts," he pleaded with the Negro people, "forget our special grievances and close our ranks."

A cry of protest over the enormity of that doctrine went up. Attacks on Du Bois for the editorial had not died out before astonished Negroes learned that he had accepted a commission with the General Staff. Protest was redoubled and he was accused of being a traitor to his people. Perhaps wisely, the General Staff changed its plans and Du Bois never served in the position that had been created for him. And in the September, 1918, issue of Crisis magazine Du Bois upbraided "any man or race that seeks to turn his country's tragic predicament to his own personal gain."

These efforts to still Negro discontent at home were going on concurrently with the issuance in France of the "Secret Information" bulletin and the most vicious attacks on Negro soldiers. Haunted by the specter of the Russian revolution, Americans who were conducting the war were trying to insure against any eventuality by whipping up racial feeling to an unprecedented degree. There was some sense to their actions too, for, as a Negro historian observed later, never were Negroes more discontented than in that fall of 1918 when the armistice was signed.

There were difficulties in France, too. Every Negro soldier who saw active service knows the story of some unpopular white officer who lost his life in action. Such officers had a way of getting in the path of fatal bullets that was alarming. There were other cases in which Negro officers had presented a united front when discrimination grew too onerous. In view of these danger signs the War Department hurried Major Robert Russa Moton, principal of Tuskegee Institute, to France soon after the armistice was signed. Major Moton pleaded with the soldiers not to "become arrogant" and urged them to adapt themselves to American ways on their return home. Southern whites founded the Interracial Commission to help returning soldiers "adjust themselves." Everybody was expecting trouble.

There was plenty of it. Sixty-two Negroes were lynched in 1919. Marauding bands set upon Negro soldiers in southern states, ripped war decorations from their uniforms, beat and, in many instances, killed them. The Ku Klux Klan was revived. A series of race riots swept the country. Washington newspapers published detailed plans in advance for an offensive by a mob on the Negro section of the city in the summer of 1919. Negro soldiers organized defense squads. Another riot broke out in Chicago a month later and again Negro soldiers bore the brunt of defending the Negro section. In quick succession there were riots at Chester, Pennsylvania; Omaha, Nebraska, and Elaine, Arkansas. And Negroes fought back. Negro editors, perhaps a little ashamed of their craven conduct during the war, sneered openly at the democracy to which the soldiers had returned. Other editorials openly exhorted Negroes to take up arms in their own defense. The old concept of the Negro as a docile, ever-suffering foil disappeared.

These lessons have not been wasted on the War Department. Segregation of Negroes is more scrupulous than ever. Negro gold-star mothers were sent to France on a freight boat on one occasion and on separate ships on every occasion. The color line is rigorously drawn in the mechanized branches of the service, in the navy, the marine corps and the air service.

Rumor has it that War College plans call for the use of Negroes only in labor detachments in that inevitable next war. Regardless of the truth of that rumor it is a fact, denied officially of course, that Negro combat units are being disbanded. Negro regiments are far below peace-time strength and it is almost impossible for a Negro to enlist in any branch of the service. Both cavalrymen and infantrymen are being used as servants for white soldiers and officers. R.O.T.C. training is denied Negro students beyond the second year in state universities — commissions are given for third and fourth year service. Citizens Military Training Camps are closed to Negroes. There are only four Negro commissioned officers in the regular army; one of them is on R.O.T.C. duty and the other three are chaplains. Recently the government refused to assign Negro reserve officers to C.C.C. camps. White communities would object, the War Department explained.

In the face of these facts Negro public figures of the stripe that supported the last war refuse to attack these policies. Their theory, disproved in practice for 150 years, is that if Negroes serve loyally during war they will be rewarded by being given full citizenship rights. Every crumb is eagerly seized upon to support this thesis and when a Negro was accepted at West Point in 1929 — the first in forty years — there was rejoicing everywhere. Nobody says much about the fact that he was dismissed. Not a person at West Point spoke to the Negro cadet out of the line of duty during his first year there.

There are more and more dissenting voices. In 1932 a former lieutenant who had seen service in France issued a statement branding as foolish any Negro who voluntarily put on the uniform. Editorial commendation was surprisingly widespread. When that next war does come there will be frantic pleas to close ranks. The war mongers will drip promises again. Doubtless, Negroes will be conscripted along with other citizens. Pressure of public sentiment will force the arming of some of them. The question is what the Negro will do with the guns he is given. Perhaps he will go to some foreign land to be spit upon by commanding officers and then return home to be discriminated against and lynched. Or perhaps he will revive the tradition of Houston, combine his strength with the poor whites to settle some scores of his own.

[1] For a short history of treatment of Negro troops see Crisis Magazine for June, 1919.

Sacramento, 1935

Now among all these good harvests
The human harvest fails.
Grain, vegetable and fruit are ripened,
Men are stored in jails.

The stem is rotten on the root
And the seed on the stem.
Go store away the meager yield
Of men with life in them.

But store them safely away
These fellows who proclaim
That men shall stand up soon,
Ripe like autumn grain.

Darkness and rot can have their time
But bumpers will yet be grown
From the red seed that's hoarded now
In barns of stone.

CLEMENT GREENBERG.

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Americans in Mexico

J. P. HARRIGAN

AS THE lights go on and the train climbs the bleak plateau that is northern Mexico, the Pullman porter goes from seat to seat pulling down the shades. To a look of inquiry he responds, "For your own protection, sir."

Later one understands, vaguely. If protection is needed it must be from the hunger outside. For Mexico is still the land of contrasts—one steps from blazing sunlight into shadow that is deep and cool; one sees on every hand evidence of barbaric opulence and behind it poverty so bitter as to make our Hoovervilles luxurious in comparison. There are politicians with palaces in half a dozen states and millions of peons who are as penniless as the politicians were before the "revolution." But stay . . . are not the peons promised by these same politicians "the gradual dictatorship of the proletariat"? Does one not see everywhere in Mexico—even on a stone bench outside President Cárdenas' home in Patzcuaro—the hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union? Surely cynicism never reached a greater height.

One is tempted to continue in this vein and, on the basis of a stay of some few weeks, to offer generalization and platitude upon a fascinating land. But my own ambitions are of more limited scope; all I would do is to offer here a few observations upon the conduct of my own countrymen—and countrywomen—when they venture south of the Rio Grande.

It is market day in Toluca. The morning was fair, but this is the rainy season and now the afternoon rain is descending. Two American women sit comfortably in the back seat of an automobile and bargain for a basket with a Mexican woman standing in the street. ("My dear, the Mexicans just love to bargain; they feel cheated when you don't let them. You must never pay the price they ask at first.")

How far international friendship will go! And how feverishly American women will bargain so as not to cheat the Mexicans of their pleasure.

"Four pesos, lady."

"Two pesos."

"Four pesos."

"Two and a half. Not a cent more."

"Lady, it cost me that to make it."

"Not a cent more."

"Three pesos, lady."

(To her friend) "Is it worth it? I saw one in Sanborn's . . ."

"That wasn't as nice. I'd take it."

"All right, three pesos. Bring me change for five pesos."

The peasant woman turned and disclosed, tied on her back and sleeping placidly in the pelting rain, a tiny baby. How strange that for half a peso she was willing to keep her baby in the rain. But half a peso, despite the fact that it is more than many a peon receives for a day's work, is still less than fourteen cents in good, solid, hard American cash. . . . It must have been the pleasure of bargaining.

Two middle-aged American women are talking on a hotel veranda perched above the Pacific. Over-stuffed blonde says to scrawny brunette: "It really isn't safe to travel in Mexico unless you know some Spanish. There's no telling what these impudent Mexican boys may be saying to you; they may be calling you 'dearie' or something worse."

An hilarious group of Americans is sitting in a hotel dining room. A hunchback enters and momentarily eludes the vigilance of the head waiter; before the latter can interfere the hunchback has gained the protection of the jovial guests. He may be tossed out later like so much rubbish, but for the moment he is safe.

The awkward intruder's errand holds no threat to the management nor to the dignity of the establishment. His desire is simply to sell some tickets for Saturday's lottery. And he is successful. True, tickets can be bought on almost every busy corner—but not from a hunchback. Every American at the table buys some tickets and then gravely rubs them, for luck, on the hunchback's hump. He assures them that if they do this, they cannot lose.

Oh lucky hunchback! Were you tall and straight and lithe you too would have to risk your clean young limbs jumping on passing automobiles in an effort to dispose of one or two stray ten-centavo coupons; you too would have to wait in the rain as crowds came forth from motion-picture theaters and fronton games. But you are fortunate; you have a hump and can sell your tickets, albeit warily, in the best hotels.

A plump little woman, who has read Hemingway but who scarcely knows one end of the bull from the other, inquires very earnestly of a clerk in a tourist office: "Are you sure it will be a *good* bull fight?"

It is a hotel in Taxco, conducted by Americans and famous for its aggressively bad American cooking. Bedrooms open off a gallery that runs about the patio—a gallery that is alternately dining room and lobby. Some guests are breakfasting; it is half-past eight. A pompous, florid American knocks on one of the bedroom doors and then peeps inside. "Are you up, Jack?" he asks. "That's the boy! That's the spirit I like to see!"

The florid man turns to the assembled guests and, addressing no one in particular, exclaims: "Do you know who that is? That's Jack Flaherty, only son of P. J. Flaherty, the Dime-A-Shine King of Kansas City. Why at home that boy never gets up until ten o'clock, but look how he snaps into it down here! That's the kind of a spirit I like."

Taxco is the center of silver and tin handicraft in Mexico, and it is said that very

L. Arenal

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fine serapes are made there too. Furthermore, it is an artistic center—rather, it is the Greenwich Village of Mexico, and the most staid school teacher from Des Moines is likely to launch out with smock and palette—one is as important as the other.

To American visitors there is something sacred about the handicrafts of Mexico. Teachers and social workers who are militant opponents of child labor within the United States gurgle with enthusiasm over the spectacle of eight or ten persons at work indifferently on an indifferent rug and ignore the child of eight who sits in the corner winding wool. It is all so picturesque, so expressive, so quaint, so I-don't-know-what that the child doesn't matter.

As a matter of fact, American visitors to Mexico, almost without exception, go in very heavily for culture. Women who are ignorant whether the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions dealt with prohibition or slavery learn to distinguish—or to think they distinguish—between Aztec and Toltec. The fact that Mexico is an armed camp with soldiers on every train and every bus interests them not at all; the past is so much safer for it is dead.

At the beginning of these notes I announced that I would forego the temptation to utter oracular profundities concerning Mexican conditions and Mexican life. But may I be permitted a word about childhood in Mexico? The appalling truth is apparent to any visitor however casual; children are exploited in a manner permitted only in the most backward of nations. They are exploited in the home and out of the home, in the city and in the village, in handicrafts and in manufacture. Let no one deny that the press in Mexico is free, for tiny children of four sell newspapers on the streets at night; our own newspaper proprietors demand no greater freedom.

Yet childhood in Mexico could be so happy—actually is so happy for those children who escape this exploitation. Many "modern schools" have been built in Mexico; some are not open, others are poorly attended. But those that actually are open and attended present an unforgettable picture. I am not sentimentalizing when I say that childhood in Mexico is infinitely winsome and lovely. In school and playground alike there is a complete absence of quarrels and noisy bickering. A playground in an American city is in a continual froth of dissension; in Mexico children walk through the streets hand in hand or arm in arm. The boys indulge in rough sports — boxing, basketball — but without bitterness and without recriminations.

Even a family excursion in Mexico is altogether different from the noisy and acrimonious expedition that takes place when a New York family decides to spend a Sunday at the beach. The children do not whine; their elders do not threaten dire penalties "when I get you home."

Hard-Coal Law

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

REACTION is riding hard in Luzerne County anthracite center where the Glen Alden Coal Company, aided by one of the most corrupt political machines in the country, smashed a strike and nearly succeeded in wrecking an independent union after Lewis' U.M.W.A. had maneuvered it into a difficult position.

The lawless "law-and-order" forces of the county are taking the opportunity not only to punish the miners (more than twenty of whom are behind the bars, some on criminal charges) but to punish every friend of the miners. E. P. Jennings, a Wilkes Barre business man, a printer, long established in the community and a civic leader, has been arrested in one of the most contemptible frame-ups in America's sordid industrial history. He is accused of dynamiting the automobile of Mary Valentine, daughter of Judge W. Alfred Valentine, notorious as the "injunction judge."

Valentine, who made a gift to the Glen Alden Coal Company of an injunction crippling to the strikers, is notorious as a coal-company judge as, for that matter, all the judges of the county are said to be. Jennings circulated a petition for the impeachment of Judge Valentine, secured 10,000 signatures and was the spokesman of the delegation that presented it to the Pennsylvania legislature. The coal-company lobby succeeded in quashing the impeachment proceedings. Jennings repeated his accusations against Valentine in a signed article in The Unemployed News, organ of the Luzerne County Unemployed League, which he helped to organize. Newsboys handling this issue were arrested and were released only when Jennings demanded a public investigation.

At this point the frameup mechanics decided it was time to get Jennings. He was called to a hotel to meet a business man from New York to discuss a large printing order. The business man, who introduced himself as a Mr. McHale, was very nebulous in speech and action. He vanished after the conference. While Jennings was leaving the hotel, he was taken in custody on the dynamite charge.

Arraigned with him were a Charles Harris, alias Joe Harris, who asked for no counsel and made no plea, and a Gerald Williams, of the Bronx, New York, supposed to be a stranger to the anthracite country, an import from the New York underworld. Subsequently, Williams was exposed in The Scranton Times as Fred Buchner, a life-long resident of Scranton, also known in Wilkes Barre.

"Williams' " testimony was to the effect that he had been told, by a friend in New York, that there was a job for him in Wilkes Barre; that he came to Wilkes Barre to take the job; that he was met at the station by Jennings, who took him to his office, showed him a package of dynamite and offered him $300 to explode it in Mary Valentine's car. "Williams" alleges that he refused it but after reading of the dynamiting in a Wilkes Barre paper he purchased in New York, he returned to Wilkes Barre to extort money from Jennings by threats of exposure. The charge on which "Williams" is held is extortion and the subsequent trial may include the farce of Jennings appearing in "Williams" defense on this charge. When Jennings was arrested at the hotel he was, according to Williams' story, waiting there to pay Williams an additional $100, after having made two payments of $150 each. Williams says further, that Jennings told him that he had got someone to do the dynamiting cheaper.

McHale, the plant, has vanished; Joe Harris, who will probably be brought forward as the dynamiter "hired" by Jennings, seemed curiously content to sojourn in jail, to make no attempt to defend himself at the preliminary hearings. He is known to the Scranton police authorities. The paid-perjurer smell reeks from him. Williams, or Buchner, has already been exposed as a perjurer; and his testimony at the preliminary hearings has already been proved to be a perjury. With this crude frame-up, the coal-company bosses and their accomplices in the county and state government are attempting so to crush the labor movement, so effectively to destroy free expression of opinion that even "respected" citizens will be intimidated. If this frameup is not beaten, labor in the hardcoal mining districts will be seriously crippled.

Jennings is fighting hard. Through the Unemployed League and through the miners he has a mass-defense following. In the civic life of Luzerne County he has won respect as an advocate of public control of water supply and in the work of citizens' leagues. He is facing this trial, however, with depleted personal resources; and the workers of Luzerne County have no money to spare after their desperate fight against the Glen Alden Company. Financial aid should be sent to the secretary and treasurer of the Defense Fund, Mrs. Katherine Weeks, 235 E. Church Street, Nantico, Pa.

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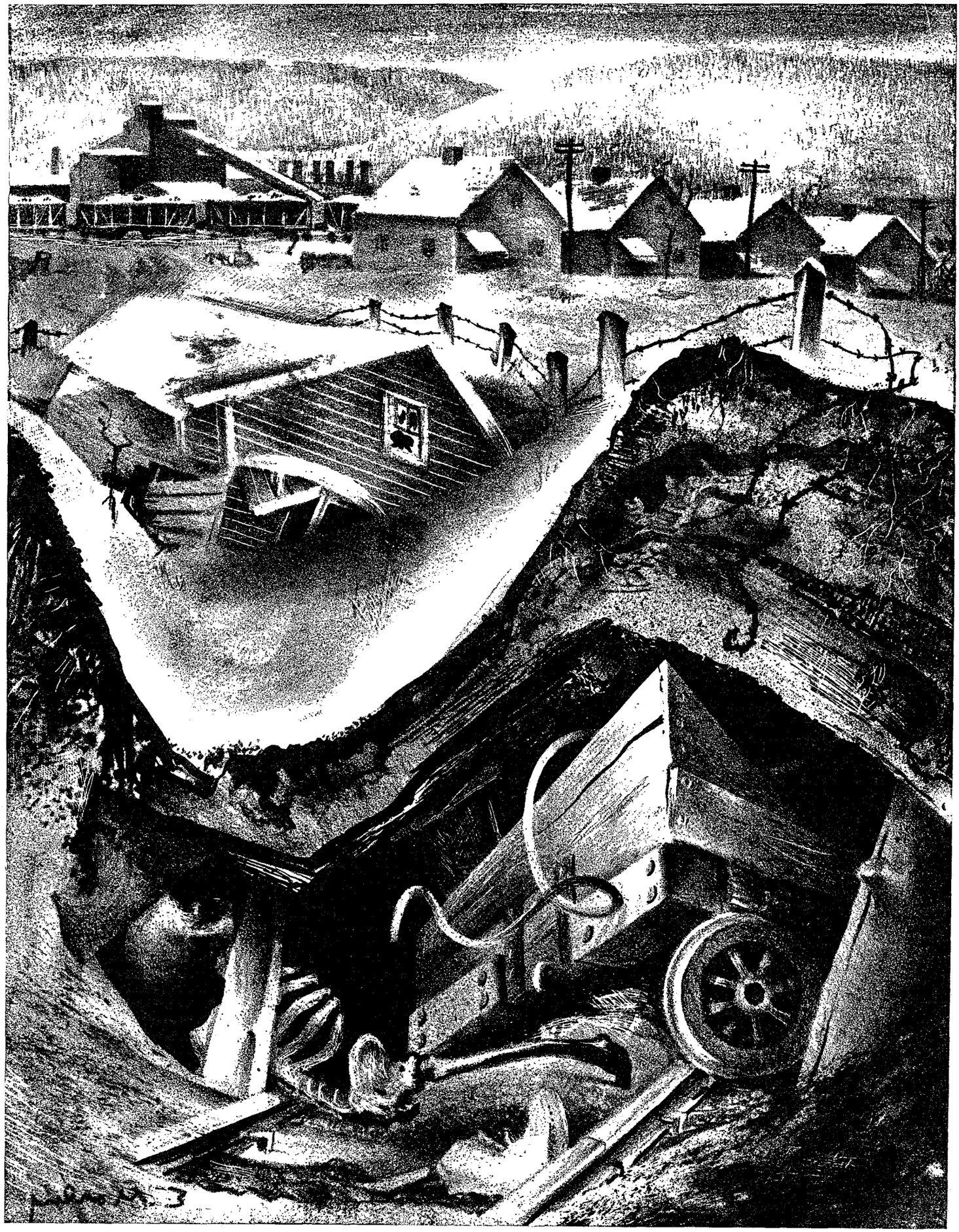

La Salle Gallery

HARD COAL LANDSCAPE

Lithograph by Eugene Morley.

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Correspondence

Hearst's Attack in Chicago

To The New Masses:

The Hearst press of Chicago is telling its readers that "Despite opposition from leading citizens, the Chicago Workers' School is preparing to reopen . . . and to begin a term of filling the minds of Chicagoans, young and old alike, with ideas of class hatred and revolution."

It is not telling anybody, however, that in conjunction with the Building Commissioner of Chicago, they have temporarily succeeded in stopping all work in the renovation of the new headquarters of the school at 161-163 N. Franklin Street. Using certain City Ordinances as a weapon, Hearst is apparently planning to force the Chicago Workers' School to vacate its present premises. It was Hearst who brought pressure on Florsheim, the owner of the building where the school was formerly housed, to force the school to move.

Anti-Hearst forces in Chicago must protest this action against academic freedom. The Chicago Federation of Labor and teachers' groups in this city have been very outspoken in their condemnation of Hearst's Red-baiting articles. The Chicago Workers' School calls for the support of all who recognize in Hearst a fascist menace to the civil liberties of the American people.

A conference to defend Workers' Education is being called for Sunday, September 22, at 11 A. M., at the new headquarters of the school. Organizations interested are urged to send delegates. Individuals are also welcome. The school needs financial assistance in this fight. The little money it has has gone into the repairs and decoration of its new headquarters—all of which will be lost if the school is compelled to move.

Eugene David,
Director, Chicago Workers' School.
161-163 N. Franklin St., Chicago. Ill.

A Letter to J. B. Matthews

To The New Masses:

I am enclosing a letter I wrote to Mr. J. B. Matthews, vice-president of Consumers Research. It may interest you sufficiently to publish it.

H. N. Fairchild.

My dear Mr. Matthews:

In 1934, while you were touring New England for the American League Against War and Fascism, you addressed the Harvard N.S.L. at a luncheon over which I had the signal honor of presiding. Your remarks at that time, you may recall, emphasized the militant, organized labor movement as the main necessary bulwark against *fascism and consequent war.*

By some strange dialectic you have since compromised and surrendered every particle of principle that you then expressed. Your most recent actions and utterances in regard to the strikers in your own firm, ally you in no uncertain manner with the very reaction and demagogy which you so glibly condemned. This is of course clear to you. It may interest you to know that it is also clear to others who do not take your opportunism and hypocrisy lightly. You are now a big business man—I congratulate you.

H. N. Fairchild.

Appeal for Terre Haute

To The New Masses:

I appeal to all labor organizations to voice their support against the brutalities of the local police whose actions are evidently inspired by a newly-organized group of labor-crushers, parading under the name of law and order.

The fight against military dictatorship will be continued by every means at our command; however, the twenty-five-weeks' strike of the workers at the Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company has badly drained our finances and we appeal to every freedom-loving citizen not only for moral but also for financial support.

Max Schafer,
Vice-President, Central Labor Union and Secretary, Terre Haute Labor and Socialist Defense Committee.

Terre Haute, Ind.

R. B. Eleazer Denies He Said It

To The New Masses:

Please let me say that I made no such statements relative to Roland Hayes as those ascribed to me in an interview with Sasha Small in The New Masses of August 20. The quotations are entirely foreign to anything that I have ever said or thought. I am unable to account for them except on the basis of inexcusable misunderstanding or deliberate misrepresentation.

In the interest of fairness, I shall appreciate publication of this statement.

R. B. Eleazer.

Atlanta. Ga.

Sasha Small Replies

To The New Masses:

Statements made behind closed doors in a conversation between two people are very difficult to prove or disprove. It becomes pretty much a question of your word against the other fellow's. I used no pressure of any sort to force any statements from Mr. Eleazer. He gave me about two hours of his time during which he did almost all of the talking. Mr. Eleazer loves to talk. He is carried away by his own eloquence and he expanded gratuitously on every point raised. The fact that he said more than he meant to say is no fault of mine.

He grew particularly expansive on the subject of slow but sure progress that the Commission for Interracial Relations was making. He boasted of the new *Negro* schools, the better pavements in *Negro* neighborhoods, the buses for *Negro* people, etc. He gave me a pile of literature which bore out every statement he made. It was in connection with this part of our discussion that the disputed statement was made.

I ventured the opinion that all these "improvements" were doing very little to break down Jim Crowism and segregation in the South. Mr. Eleazer gave a short lecture on evolution vs. revolution bringing in everything from what he thought on the Soviet Union to the iniquities of the International Labor Defense and winding up with the dilemma —What is more important, a new *Negro* school or flaunting social equality, which is anathema to "them" into the teeth of a community which is not enlightened enough—yet—to understand?

Mr. Eleazer may be unable to account for my statements. I find it very easy to account for his. His statements are all consistent with the whole policy of the organization whose educational director and publicity agent he is. This is not a question of personalities—or proving who told the truth. Mr. Eleazer is an eloquent defender of polite and hypocritical Jim Crowism. He may shout from the housetops that Roland Hayes did come in his front door, but it is more significant that he does not dispute the statement he made to me in answer to the question: "What are you going to do for Angelo Herndon?" His answer, uncontested and not "inexcusably misunderstood or deliberately misinterpreted" is still *"If a youngster wants to commit suicide, we will not stop him from becoming a martyr."*

In all fairness to Mr. Eleazer it should be said that the statement about Roland Hayes was probably a slip of the tongue, an oratorical flourish made by a man who is proud of the fact that he is an "old hand at the anti-lynching game."

Sasha Small.

New York City.

The Law Was Repealed

To The New Masses:

In your issue of September 10 you have an editorial on the landlord-police terror in the Black Belt against the striking cotton pickers. It is entitled "Death in the Black Belt." The editorial contains an important factual omission to which I should like to call your attention.

You speak of the fact that Governor Graves "vetoed" the state anti-sedition bill a day too late and that it became law. However, a tremendous state-wide wave of mass protest answered this "neglect" of Governor Graves and within ten days after its enactment the law was repealed and wiped off the Alabama statute books. There is now no state anti-sedition bill. There remains a state criminal-anarchy law which was enacted many years ago. In addition there are city anti-sedition ordinances which make possession of "seditious literature" punishable by ten months on the gang.

The facts in the recent Ed Sears railroading deserve wider publicity. Ed Sears, a union miner, active in I.L.D. work in Bessemer, was given ten months on the gang for possession of copies of Sasha Small's Scottsboro pamphlet "Act 3." The sentence was passed on Sears a few hours after he was taken off a trolley and jailed. The police held him incommunicado, refusing his request to call the I.L.D. lawyer. He was not permitted time to prepare his case nor was he supplied with other counsel. The officials have put every obstacle in the way of the I.L.D. in its effort to get Sears out on bail and appeal the vicious sentence. The lawyer for the I.L.D. has been subjected to insults and threats, the officials sullenly telling him that "damn n——r-loving lawyers ought to be in jail, too."

Robert Wood.

Birmingham, Ala.

Early Proletarian Writing

To The New Masses:

I have come across what to me at any rate is one of the earliest bits of proletarian writing in modern times. The passage is written by Jean de la Bruyere (1645-1696), who (according to Williamson Updike Vreeland of Princeton) "pictured with remarkable keeness of observation, wit and satire the life and society, the oppression and foibles of his day." The passage I have selected, translated roughly, is:

THE PEASANTS

Visible are certain wild animals, both male and female, spread out over the country, black, discolored, burned by the sun, impregnated in the earth into which they dig, moving with an unconquerable stubbornness; they are an articulate voice, and when they rise to their feet, they reveal a human face; and indeed they are human! In the night they withdraw to their dens where they live on black bread, water and roots; they spare others the trouble of sowing, laboring and gathering in order to live—others who do not deserve the bread which they have sown!

Mark Miller.

Philadelphia, Pa.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

On the Right We Have—

FORERUNNERS OF AMERICAN FASCISM, by Raymond Gram Swing. Julian Messner, Inc. $1.75.

AMERICAN MESSIAHS, by The Unofficial Observer. Simon and Schuster. $2.

TIME was when timorous souls comforted themselves with the thought that fascism was an affliction peculiar to "foreign" and "backward" and "undemocratic" countries and that the American people, inoculated with the principles of Jefferson and Lincoln, were immune to its ravages. But the past two years have witnessed the Americanization of fascism and the emergence of an indigenous weed.

It is still too early to speak of a fascist movement in this country. But it is not too early to speak of potential fascist movements, of a number of neat little fascist eggs that may soon be hatching under the fertile warmth of the Wall Street bird of prey and shown, in these volumes, in the nest.

Of *American Messiahs* not much need be said. It is mostly cocktail and fizz, a glorified column of Washington chatter: truths, half-truths, rumors and debonair distortions, shaken well with a few bright gags and sold as a book of "inside stuff." With anonymity for a shield, the author evidently found that the book could be written more quickly and easily by trusting to memory for much of his data rather than by bothering with libraries and newspaper morgues. The chapter on Father Coughlin, for example, if offered as an article to any magazine of standing, would be rejected for its factual inaccuracies alone. The author is pro-New Deal—though he admits that the N.R.A. was dictated by the Chamber of Commerce—lists the duPonts (Morgan's closest industrial allies) with Rockefeller and Ford in the anti-Morgan camp, thinks Communists are beneath contempt and Socialists little better, and believes that "Lenin's organization of the Communist State in Russia was based on direct borrowings from Roman (Catholic) methods of rule."

Forerunners of American Fascism is of a different stamp. It is a book of the new fear that is beginning to take hold of the sensitive middle-class mind. The work of one of the best of the liberal journalists, it is written with luminous honesty and deep concern over the fate that he believes awaits this country. But it is a book that for all its fine sincerity and occasional flashes of insight, offers no real light on the character of fascism, its future in this country or the methods by which it can be fought. *Forerunners of American Fascism* is a good example of that remarkable obtuseness that seems to short-circuit the thinking of even the best middle-class minds so long as they remain swathed in the fog of middle-class subjectivism and empiricism and shy away from the clear light of scientific Marxism.

Swing's forerunners of fascism are Father Coughlin, Huey Long, William Randolph Hearst, Senator Bilbo of Mississippi and Dr. Townsend—the latter two, he points out, not properly fascist in character, but significant of a trend. Perhaps one should add a forerunner of the forerunners, President Roosevelt, whom Swing subjects to caustic comment in the opening chapter. "As Dr. Bruening prepared the way for government by decree in Germany," he writes, "the President himself has built some of the foundations of a fascist structure in America."

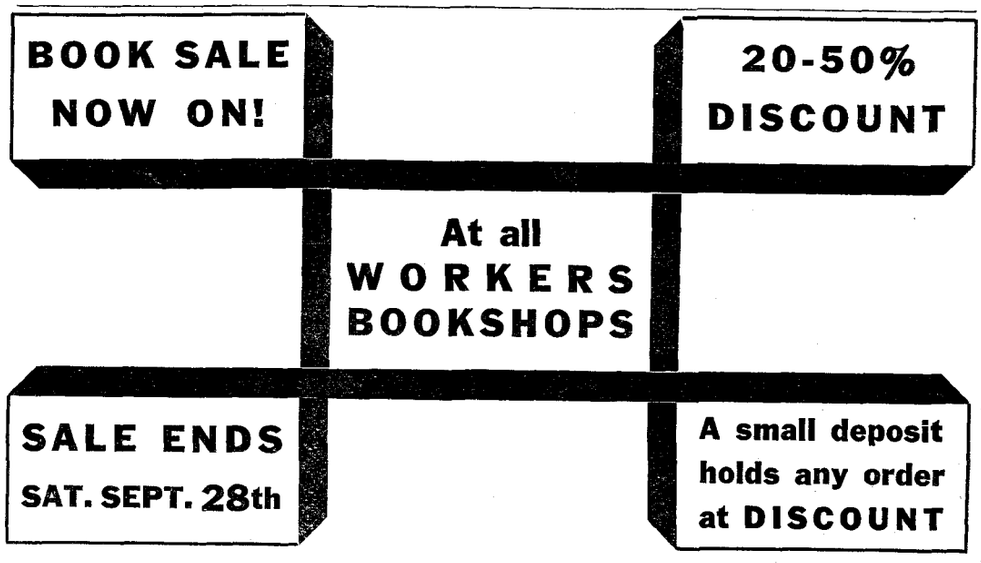
But even on this question Swing is not entirely clear. Roosevelt to him is not the servant of the big banks and trusts who consciously set out to restore capitalist profits, but a man who "is proving weaker than the forces of finance capitalism." Though he points to the trend toward compulsory arbitration as one of the signs that "the President is edging toward the standard fascist solution of the labor question," he sees hope for labor in the Wagner Bill, in which the threat of compulsory arbitration certainly looms large.

Swing was perhaps the first of the liberal writers to understand the fascist implications in Father Coughlin and his chapter on the radio priest contains a number of penetrating things. All the more amazing, therefore, is the hopeless muddle of his chapters on Huey Long and Hearst. He is full of all sorts of misgivings about Long and characterizes him as a menace to democracy, yet his desire to be "fair" in the abstract, plus what appears to be only a superficial acquaintance with the Kingfish's actual career, leads him to find so many good points that he ends by writing what amounts to an apology for him. Long, according to Swing, "has shifted the weight of taxation from the poor, who were crippled under it, to the shoulders that can bear it." The facts are the reverse; he has cut down the assessments on big property owners and reduced by 50 percent the tax on cotton gins owned by wealthy planters, while he has saddled the poor with a tobacco tax, a gasoline tax and other assessments. (See Sender Garlin's pamphlet, *The Real Huey P. Long.*)

"Huey has fought the public-utility companies during his whole political career"—but only a few pages later Swing quotes the testimony of Julius Long, Huey's brother, before a Senate investigating committee that "Huey's first unsuccessful candidacy for the governorship in 1924 was financed principally by the Southwestern Gas and Electric Company and allied interests."

"He (Long) is free of the virus of racial prejudice." But it was Long who, after abolishing the $1 poll tax, issued a leaflet denouncing as "an underhand and secret lie" the story circulated by his opponents "that this amendment for free poll taxes will let the Negro vote in our elections."

This is a sad chapter—sad because it shows how liberal confusion can lead a man who is an opponent of fascism into an objective defense of one of the most dangerous fascist demagogues we have had. But even sadder is the one on Hearst. The name of Der Fuehrer of San Simeon has become such a byword for everything reactionary and fascist in American life that one would think that



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even a liberal couldn't go wrong. But Swing accomplishes the incredible. His portrait of Hearst is positively elegiac. The pre-war Hearst according to Swing, was a sincere progressive, "a champion of union labor, an enemy of corruption in politics, a passionate foe of big business." Forgotten is the man who incited the war against Spain, who called for the invasion of Mexico, who crusaded against "the yellow peril," who employed scab labor in his California mines, who went from one racketeering venture in journalism and politics to another. Forgotten, above all, is the only consistent thing in Hearst's entire career—his demagogy.

As for the post-war and particularly the present-day Hearst, Swing finds him thoroughly reactionary. But he sees this millionaire to the manor born not as the representative of the most reactionary section of finance-capital, but as the spokesman of what Swing regards as the fascist-minded lower middle class. And he practically absolves Hearst of his crimes ("It may be that Hearst is blamed for too much. After all, he is not a creator, he expresses"), viewing him as the passive sounding board for the most vulgar and reactionary sentiments of the lower middle class.

All of which confusion and self-stultification flows from a wrong conception of the nature of fascism. Swing views fascism as "a reorganization of society," when it is the imposition of a new political technique, combining terror, demagogy and abolition of parliamentarianism and democratic rights, upon the old economic and social order. He thinks that fascism "swallows up the social conflict," when this is only what it pretends to do, while actually it develops all social conflicts to an unprecedented degree. And above all, he makes the mistake so often made by liberal and Socialist writers of viewing fascism as the rule of the lower middle class. "Hillbillies have been the underdogs of the South," he writes; "now through Huey Long they are supreme in Louisiana." And "the Hitler regime . . . was their [the lower middle class] first real experience of power in the long history of Germany."

Swing's basic error is that he confuses those classes (the farmers and city petty-bourgeoisie) that are the chief dupes of fascism and form its mass base with the classes (the big capitalists and landowners) whose interests it represents and whose economic and political power it seeks to maintain.

Failing to understand the forces that produce fascism, it is inevitable that Swing should be unable to see the forces that can prevent and destroy it. The lower middle class he regards as a single reactionary whole, while he has no faith in the militant labor movement, viewing it, in fact, as a generator of fascism ("Our one safety against fascism may lie in the absence of any formidable Communist movement"). He therefore comes to the conclusion that fascism is inevitable. And he puts his faith in the possibility of postponing fascism for a while on two alternatives: a business recovery or "to make democracy work"—that very democracy which, as he himself has pointed out, has worked in the opposite direction.

Despite Swing's gloomy prophecy, there is abundant evidence to indicate that fascism can be prevened. But not by seeking refuge from the devil behind the skirts of his mother. To look for salvation to bourgeois democracy is to grasp at a rope that may become a halter. We need not theorize in the abstract: Germany and Austria have shown us how not to fight fascism, France has shown us how it can be defeated. The speech of Dimitroff and the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International have summarized these lessons and pointed the way. The united front and the people's front—in our country a broad workers' and farmers' Labor Party—is the road to victory over the false messiahs of fascism. The middle class is not lost; it is still to be won.

A. B. MAGIL.

Emptying the Melting Pot

STRANGE PASSAGE, by Theodore Irwin. Harrison Smith & Robert Haas. $2.

WHEN the American Empire was being built, railroads flung across the continent, mines dug, forests stripped, agents were sent throughout impoverished Europe to pack steamers and trains with immigrant laborers. Immigrant transient hotels sprang up along the waterfronts of Boston, Hoboken, Baltimore. Immigrant trains sped to the frontiers of the West and Middle West. The ideological superstructure was in conformity with the economic life of the era. Rhetoricians prated about the melting pot. In their new homeland, raw immigrants, knowing nothing of the English tongue, would become naturalized at the behest of local politicians at a cost of about twenty-five cents. Then came a series of economic crises. At last the Westward-ho! rush came to a halt. Labor had become a "surplus commodity." Instead of the "melting pot," the expression "undesirable alien" came into vogue and finally Congress passed a quota immigration law under the euphemism of "selective immigration."

The legal approach to ruthless deportation was made by gradual steps. Behind the legal sophistries, like a sinister force, was the cry of "labor unrest." The process was to be reversed. Immigrant trains began to roll eastward, now filled with "undesirable aliens," "criminal syndicalists," "labor agitators."

Nothing illustrates so well the fallacy that legal concepts and institutions dictate and control the social institutions than the operation of the laws in the deportation of aliens. Within the shell of Jeffersonian democracy, legal evasions were crystallized to justify autocratic despotism. After the assassination of President McKinley, a law was enacted barring from entry and making deportable, anarchists and other persons who advocate political assassination or violent overthrow of government. This apparently salutary measure for the preservation of the state was to be in practice extended to persons who had nothing in common with assassins or anarchists. Later, during an agitation, led largely by the Hearst papers, there was unearthed an alleged "international white-slave plot." The obvious inference was intended that all white slavers and prostitutes were aliens. The result was that length of residence of an alien in the United States was no longer a protection against deportation. The door to blackmail was open; terror entered the hearts of unnaturalized workers. From year to year, by congressional enactment and court interpretation, the deportation net was spread. During the World War a new precedent was set which even removed the security that naturalization had given to the foreign-born citizen. On the theory that he had "defrauded" the government and the courts, a foreign-born naturalized citizen who had engaged in "seditious" activity, could have his citizenship annulled, long after he had become naturalized, on the ground that at the time he had sworn to uphold the Constitution and foreswore allegiance to the country of his birth, he had "mental reservations" which only his subsequent "seditious" activity had disclosed.

The legal sophistries by which the protections of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution have been taken away from the foreign born, may, to a mere lay logician, seem disingenuous. Briefly, they are to this effect: the United States, in the exercise of its political sovereignty, has the right to deport any alien for whatever reason it may deem fit; the legal process of deportation is not deemed a criminal, but a civil procedure, therefore the constitutional safeguards of right of trial by jury, to bail, against double jeopardy, refusal to testify against oneself and all other provisions, do not apply; the deportation proceeding is an exercise of the administrative function only and the courts will not interfere with the decision of the Immigration Inspector or the Secretary of Labor, unless the deportee can prove "gross abuse" and even where this is clear, the courts rule that if there is "some evidence" to support the government's decision, the courts will not interfere.

It is apparent that the deportation proceeding thus becomes a most effective weapon in dealing with "labor unrest." Aliens can be picked up, without a warrant and deported expeditiously, without great expense or legal flurry.

Behind the dry legal theorizing lies a veritable continent of human suffering. Piti-

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ful tales there are of injustice, sordid accounts of official insolence and of the despisal, by the authorities, of the dispossessed, politically unprotected, minority. In the light of history the whole problem assumes a somewhat Machiavellian aspect. Charles Beard, in his *Rise of American Civilization,* points out that the American Colonies were settled largely by indentured servants and the proletariat of the English countryside. Their bootstrap-risen descendants have conveniently forgotten the humble rungs of the Founders of the Republic and are hounding workers who are more in the image of the Founders than the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution. There is a difference, however. The ruling class of England, in deporting its "undesirables" sent them to a land where the means of life and opportunity were plentiful. The American government deports its "surplus" and "undesirable" workers to overcrowded and pauperized lands where the choice lies between lifelong penury and early death.

It was during the World War that the Department of Labor, which, curious to state, is charged with the duty of ousting workers, hit on the scheme of keeping deportees in jails and detention pens, in various parts of the country and when a sufficient number had been gathered, of shipping them across the continent in prison trains called "Deportation Specials." The most notorious of these, in 1919, was the so-called "Red Special," packed with members of the I.W.W., mostly lumberjacks from the American Northwest, some of whom had been kept in jail an entire year, until a new deportation law could be passed to fit their "crimes." Since then, hundreds of these exile specials, with their doleful cargoes, have by slow stages crept from the Pacific to the Atlantic. If we could board one of these trains, or visit a detention pen at an immigration station and hear the life stories of the deportees, we could weave a wreath of tragedies. There would be the story of one who, brought to this country as a child, grew under hard conditions to manhood, suffered unemployment, labored in the mines, factories and forests of this country, all the while being moulded into the American pattern of speech, habit and outlook. Then, in maturity, during a period of labor unrest, weakened by toil and undernourishment, he is arrested for deportation as a pauper and is sent to the country of his birth, a land of which he knows nothing and where he has not a single relative or friend. Again, the tale of a woman, mother of eight American-born children, deported because she clamored for bread for herself and her family at a relief station. The law tears this mother from her children and consolingly assures whomever it may concern, that the children will be placed in a proper American institution. There is a youth who stowed away on a ship to seek asylum from the Hitler regime; he is apprehended for illegal entry and is to be delivered into the hands of the Nazi dictatorship by the "republican" heirs of Madison and Jefferson. Again, the case of a worker who sustained an injury to his head while working in a factory. Instead of receiving proper compensation and cure, he is to be deported as a pauper criminal charged with insanity. There are thousands and thousands of similar cases. The official stenographic records of their deportation preceedings, only half disclose and half conceal the true picture.

The odyssey of a deportation "special," which starts from the Northwest and wends its way toward Ellis Island, is the subject of the novel, *Strange Passage,* by Theodore Irwin. The theme of exile, with its sense of utter frustration and pathos, is rich material for a novelist. The Abbeé Prevost, who during the period of the French romantic novel, devoted much of his writing to the subject of exile, came to it with a sensational and sentimental approach. No writer of the realistic school, as far as we know, has touched the subject. Irwin brings to his subject fair equipment as a writer. He has insight, sympathy, felicity of phrase and a sense of contrasts. His deportation train jerkily crawls over "the belly of the continent." The story of this sad journey and the delineation of the occupants, takes up a third of the volume. The motley crowd of characters, violently uprooted and haphazardly thrown together, has a number of workers among them, but their significance is lost by the introduction of criminal types, adventures, degenerates and an insane woman. The author is not quite successful in describing the tedium of the passengers of this slow train, without tiring his readers. The ride is much too long, not only for the deportees, but for the book as well. Unwittingly, too, the author, by enlarging on the anti-social and the ludicrous types, is playing into the hands of the reactionaries. The legal gendarmerie may well say that the majority of the aliens on Irwin's deportation "special" ought to be deported. There is not a worker on the train who is being deported for labor-union activity or agitation; and this when innumerable workers are being deported on the charge of being Communists.

His hero, Paul, is a middle-class Austrian youth whose only "revolutionary" activity consists in having been present, some years back, in Austria, at a coffee-house meeting where students plotted a political assassination. Fleeing the country, he finally got to America as a stowaway without a passport and is now being deported as an illegal entrant. On the train Paul falls in love with Stephanie, a Belgian girl deportee. During the train ride we get the feeling of the loneliness of this heterogeneous, unwanted group, of the injustice and brutality of their treatment. But our sympathy is diverted by irrelevant incidents of homosexuality, forced humor and filth. When finally the train reaches New Jersey, it is wrecked and in the excitement several deportees escape. Among these are Paul and Stephanie. The story takes them apart for several years. They try to establish themselves in New York under changed names. The unexecuted deportation warrant hangs over their heads and over the heads of some of the other fugitives. The author is successful in conveying that feeling of insecurity which haunts countless foreign-born and even naturalized workers in this country, while the deportation laws are being made into wider nets from year to year. But for the author the story of the separated lovers must go on. Stephanie marries a settlement worker who suffers from a peculiar psychic fixation. The convicted bootlegger who escaped goes into the "hot-oil" business. Finally Paul and

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Stephanie meet, only to be soon recognized and again apprehended for deportation.

By far the best part of the book is the concluding third. The atmosphere prevailing on Ellis Island is faithfully and incisively pictured. So is the cant and hypocrisy of the New Dealers and their pretense of "humanizing the immigration service." The one triumphant note is at the end. The Soviet government has recognized the ability of Paul and has granted him a contract and a visa. Instead of Austria, where death perhaps awaits him, the Soviet Union is the place to which he is to be deported. Stephanie goes to Belgium, from where she is to follow Paul. Unfortunately, this triumphant note is done in undertone.

The importance of the book lies more in the courage of the author's approach to the theme than in his treatment of it. The writer has a social consciousness, but lacks the qualities of a bold advocate. The result is that he was damned with faint praise by the conservative reviewers. His book leaves the critics of the Left with disturbing speculations as to the reason for his timidity and with pity for his having missed so splendid an opportunity. He has not, however, exhausted the subject of deportation. The material available is rich not only in pathos, humor and satire, but offers as well an opportunity for a message, a preachment, if you like. Preachment is something that young writers are being advised to eschew. The literateurs have a word for it—propaganda.

The obvious answer to the charge of propaganda lies in the measure of the author's talent and genius. In the last analysis, the crux of the problem is singleness of purpose. The approach, the material, the substance, lies within the choice of an able writer. The purpose, however, must throughout be the driving force. It is that singleness of purpose which makes of true art the best propaganda and of propaganda, art.

HARRY ARCHER.

Concealed Dynamite

RACE DIFFERENCES, by Otto Klineberg. Harper. $2.50.

THERE is dynamite concealed in this book, enough to blast sky-high the pretensions to superiority of the white race or any segment thereof. This in spite of the fact that it is a scholarly, formalized, unembroidered, impeccably objective textbook. Its restraint is in fact its greatest weakness. The author writes under the influence of the liberal academic tradition—that to display zest and feeling in the defense of a scientific position is to detract from one's effectiveness. In consequence he here studiously refrains from entering the fray raging about him, with the result that the book becomes, at times, musty, static and unrealistic. No reader could sense from Dr. Klineberg's presentation in this volume, the grotesque lengths to which the Nordic madness has enveloped fascist Germany and the tragedies that have followed in the wake of the relentless anti-Jewish campaign of Hitler and his cohorts. He briefly presents an account of the fantasies of Günther, now pope of Nazi anthropology, and of Eugen Fischer, who was recently responsible for the shameless performance of using the World Population Congress to bolster up the Nazi eugenic program.

But samples of the crude, overtly offensive current Nazi race propaganda are missing. Likewise, one gets but a mild reflection of the seething white chauvinism in the United States. The author always shows that he is cognizant of it in his discussion of the Negro, but an elaboration of this important theme is evidently judged as extraneous. And when, near the close of the book, Dr. Klineberg puts forth his basic conclusion that "racial antagonisms must be understood in their historical and social setting; they have no basis in biology," he evasively declares that "it would be presumptuous on the part of the writer to attempt to analyze the true causes." It is not that the author does not know the lesson of the operation of the native policy of the Soviet Union, which has so effectively proven by its treatment of racial minorities that race exploitation under capitalism is a phase of class exploitation. For in a scant paragraph he has put forth the arguments involved in the "increasing tendency to see in the race problem merely one aspect of the class war"—but only to add, "On this point the writer must reserve judgment." For how long!

In spite of its excessive academic caution, the book is a valuable arsenal of fact and argument for any student who wishes to discuss the question of race intelligently. The author has painstakingly analyzed and discredited the entire gamut of alleged proofs of racial differences in intelligence and character. He has culled a vast amount of monographic literature on race, has abstracted it concisely and discussed it with scholarly competence. In no other volume in English has there been assembled as cogently the relevant evidence on the subject. His approach is not limited to any one discipline, but embraces as it should, the findings of biology, medicine, psychology and anthropology. Among the chapters that will most interest the layman are those dealing critically with psychological tests as applied to the study of race differences and those concerned with the problem of the extent to which cultural factors determine the nature of human nature. Dr. Klineberg has proven that it is superior environmental opportunity that has enabled the Negro of the North to score higher on "intelligence" tests than the Negro of the South. A layman, particularly one with a Marxist background, is apt to reply that this conclusion is obvious, that he knew it all the time. But many scholars, particularly in the South, have contended that the higher scores had nothing to do with opportunity but were caused by the selective migration of superior stocks to the North, and it is this slippery apologetic for white dominance that the author refutes. His discussion of race mixture shows that the laws against miscegenation on the statute books of many states have no basis in science. Those who believe that certain races have special aptitudes or have different degrees of susceptibility to mental abnormalities must read this book for enlightenment. The author's conclusions on all phases of his subject are sufficiently substantiated to devastate not only the crude mythology of the rabid chauvinists but also the more subtle rationalizations of scientists, who, directly or indirectly, nourish racial hatreds.

Dr. Klineberg rests his frail hope for a change in racial attitudes in a competitive society upon the dissemination of the overwhelming evidence that "there is nothing in the brain or blood of other races which justifies our ill-treatment of them." But when science bucks up against the interests of a dominant class, what chance is there that it will be widely diffused through educational channels? Let's ask the publisher how many classes in southern universities will adopt this volume as a textbook. And when the next bonfire of banned books is kindled in Nazi Germany, the book will probably feed the flames in spite of its tempered tone. In this field particularly, truth is revolutionary and an attempt to act upon it inevitably brings one beyond the classroom into the class struggle.

BERNHARD J. STERN.

The School System Analyzed

THE SOCIAL IDEAS OF AMERICAN EDUCATORS, by Merle Curti. Scribners. $3.

THIS is the tenth of the most significant volume of the Report of the American Historical Association Commission on the Social Studies in the Schools. Professor Curti, who teaches history at Smith College, set about his task in a manner that scarcely conforms to current academic tradition. He assumed, for example, that social ideas are somehow related to economic facts and to class interests; that there has always been an "unconscious and subtle influence of dominant intellectual social patterns"; and that even in the case of his own book it is "impossible for a historian to make a study of social ideas without being influenced by his own social philosophy." The result is a truly valuable contribution to the history of the public school, and in a broader sense, to the history of American culture.

In the United States, as in all the bour-

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geois capitalist countries, the free school was established in order to serve the interests of the ruling class. John Jones, the future factory hand or grocery clerk, may incidentally learn to read Shakespeare, but he is provided with the rudiments of an education for two very practical reasons: to be an *efficient* and a *docile* wage-slave. Some of the earlier American educators were distressingly frank about it, as Professor Curti reveals; and in our own time we have seen the pedagogues display an almost obscene devotion to the hand that feeds them.

However, in the palmy days of expanding capitalism and humanitarian rhetoric, of phrenology, "psychology" and "scientific method," there was a tendency to forget **fundamentals.** The Great Educators like Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, Bishop Spalding, Francis Parker, etc., many of them with laudable intentions, began to think of the school as the great agency for building democracy and abolishing injustice, and as a general panacea against all social and individual ailments. Yet almost without exception they not only failed to support organized labor, but were plainly hostile to it. Out of this great confusion of ideas and ideals, typical product of petty-bourgeois liberalism, came many technical and professional improvements, to be sure, but consciously or not the experts in pedagogy and social reform remained faithful servants of America's plutocracy.

Professor Curti's analyses of some of the more recent educational leaders are especially important because they deal with influences which still carry great weight. G. Stanley Hall, for example, looms up as pretty much of a fascist, intellectually, as well as socially, and Edward Lee Thorndike as scarcely less reactionary for all his "scientific" measurements. John Dewey and George Counts, certainly the most sympathetic and enlightened figures in this collection, for that very reason deserve the closest scrutiny. Professor Curti on the whole does them justice, but he fails to reveal the full meaning of their final positions in regard to the class struggle.

Both Dewey and Counts understand that certain economic realities mold the social scene, both have personally visited the Soviet schools and commended them, yet they still persist in their fantastic illusions that the present order, with its threat of war and fascism, can be abolished through peaceful means. At this late hour, the failure to realize the full implications of the class struggle may well amount to a betrayal of the workers whose interests they profess to cherish.

CHARLES WEDGER.

Brief Review

THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM SPAIN, by Valerin Marcu. (The Viking Press. $2.25.) Before their expulsion in 1492 the Jews of Spain were subjected to ironic changes of fortune. When those who accepted Christianity began to become bishops and fill other high posts, there was a reaction against them which culminated in the Inquisition on the one hand and a search for Pyrrenean purity as frantic as that of Hitler's Nordics. Trying to avoid a purely economic interpretation, the author comes to the ludicrous conclusion that, for all their gifts, the Jews in Spain as elsewhere failed to make themselves loved. What people, economically in competition with its neighbors, has ever been beloved? Can history show any race beloved by its neighbors?

AN ANTHOLOGY OF WORLD PROSE, edited by Carl Van Doren. (1582 pages. Reynal and Hitchcock. $3.50.) The principle Dr. Van Doren has followed is to use only that portion of the world's best literature which exists in English translation that is, itself, classic prose. His compilation is as good as such a collection might be expected to be and much more comprehensive than most. If it is pretty much of a grab bag, it happens to be a big one. This reviewer found it over-deferential to sacred writings and "the wisdom of the East." He could have found more wisdom and more material immediately valuable to his readers had he searched the revolutionary writers more and the Eastern sages less.

LEADERS, DREAMERS AND REBELS, by René Fülöp-Miller. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. (The Viking Press. $5.) Fülöp-Miller is one of the writers who are tolerated in Nazi Germany and find it tolerable. His previous books *Rasputin, the Holy Devil* and *The Power and Secret of the Jesuits* were an indication of his psychopathic interests now come to their morbid climax in this book, which holds up to leering ridicule all of mankind's efforts to advance culturally and materially and ends by using the Gestalt theory as a scientific basis for the frenzied fascist nationalism. To the Puritan libel upon humanity that emotion is all lust, the capitalist libel that man has no motive but greed, is added this fascist libel that mankind's aspiration toward freedom and equality is a flight from fear. The book's subtitle *An Account of the Great Mass Movements of History and the Wish Dreams that Inspired Them* explains how the author sees the movements of the masses —movements in a nightmare. In an appendix suggesting to the reader literature for further study, presumably digested by the author, some 2,000 titles are given, among them a number of titles in Marxist-Leninist literature. Nevertheless, in his own work the author persistently avoids economic relationships: he sees mankind only in its nightmare agonies. This dose of poisoned history has been seen fit to print by publishers who on their recently celebrated tenth anniversary pridefully pointed to the notable books on their list; and was seen fit to render into English by noted translators who once stood forward as revolutionaries.

A HISTORY OF EVERYDAY THINGS IN ENGLAND. The Age of Production: 1851-1934. Written and Illustrated by Marjorie and C. H. B. Quennell. (Charles Scribners Sons. $2.50) The Quennells, some time ago, began for children the type of books, such as *Only Yesterday* and *Our Times,* which have attempted to restore life to history. So far, however, this history deals as much with appearances as the old, their spectacles of fashions and theatricals being as little organically understood as the older historians' galleries of statesmen and panoramas of battle. The Quennells are as enthusiastic in setting out these literary tableaux as we can imagine them to be in leading an "instructive" children's game; but they keep the instruction at a minimum, not to spoil the game. In the present volume they deal with embarrassing matters: the World War and the depression and the presence of a Communist system in Russia as the natural outgrowth of "the age of production." To the first they contribute the appropriate smile through tears; to the second they apply the consoling rationalization that the uncertain and embittered young men of an age without opportunities will be stark and enterprising, though the Quennells refuse to think what their enterprise may lead to; to the third they are silent. There is no direct reference to Communism or to the developing revolution, though it is plainly enough given by indirection. To them Ford, developer of the speed-up, is a "revolutionary!" "A fellow who waves a red flag and gets run in may be called a revolutionary, while in reality he is just a nuisance. Ford, on the other hand is a real revolutionist because he has altered not only the production of things but the outlook of business men all over the world, and the end of the tale still has to be told." It will not be told, however, by the Quennels.

RISE AND FIGHT AGAIN, by Samuel Merwin. (Boni, Inc. $1.) Let us hope this bootlicking biography of Louis K. Liggett, druggist-king, which turns cut-throat business methods and stock and bankruptcy manipulations into heroisms, will have to come to the Liggett counters as a "publisher's overstock." Then we may hope to hear some Homeric laughter from Mr. Liggett's sweated clerks.

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The Theater

A Labor Theater for Brooklyn

IN a small theater adjoining the Brooklyn Academy of Music, a group of workers are giving nightly performances of two working-class plays. Employed by day in factories, department stores and offices scattered over New York, these workers have just enough minutes left, after punching the time-clock at night, to rush to their theater, change clothes and daub on some make-up in time for the curtain-rise. Few of them have had previous acting experience, but their director, Kumar Goshal, who last year was in charge of the L.I.D. drama radio-hour, has managed to fuse them into an acting unit of robust enthusiasm. Their performances, to be sure, are not finished or rich or discerning, yet one forgets these things—inherent in their present circumstances—because of the warmth and earnestness of these young men and women who are persisting against limitations they are well aware of in order to found a theater for workers in their community.

The program opens with a new play by Louis Vittes, *Until We Turn*, but Elizabeth England's *Take My Stand,* the second play, is a far better script. It makes real demands and obtains much more discernment from the actors. Those who have read the play (recently published by New Theatre League) remember it as the story of the son of a southern poor white, married to the daughter of his boss whose mill is on the verge of a complete walkout. Flayed by the workers, his former friends who now despise him as a stool-pigeon, he despairs of ever making them understand that he is a "neutral" and decides to pack up and run. But the intensifying struggle invades his scrupulous neutrality. He is driven to new realizations of the situation, which culminate in his "betrayal" of wife and boss and a final alignment with the men.

The lines of *Take My Stand* are sinuous, crisp and clear. Except for some over-zealousness in laying the groundwork, the play drives along swiftly and robustly. Some dashes of color might enrich it with brightness and some sharpening would strengthen the finale, but as it now stands it tells a convincing story and tells it in thoroughly dramatic terms. It is well worth a trip to the Labor Theater (126 St. Felix Street).

Until We Turn, the opening play, is the work of one of their actors, Louis Vittes. A strike is tying up a small mill-town, the militia is going berserk, workers are being framed and wounded and murdered—all of which is depicted from the living-room of a worker's home where some dozen characters meet and clash. Vittes centers his message on the love between the daughter of a dead working-class hero and a striking worker who cracks under the physical horrors of the strike and decides to run away. But Vittes tries to stuff too many other problems into his play—and it cracks apart. As in much agit-prop drama, his characters are types rather than people. The dialogue is overrun with clichés of thought and phrase. And yet there are occasional fresh flashes, which are made the most of by well-timed direction and spirited if often uncontrolled performances.

The Labor Theater, a member of New Theater League (126 St. Felix Street), is fifteen minutes from Fourteenth Street. Seats are thirty-five and fifty cents; the program continues through September 28. NEW MASSES readers may want to attend the September 27 performance, which is a benefit for New Theater League.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

The Screen

IF you ever doubted that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer attach a special meaning to their firm-slogan *Ars Gratia Artes* (art for art's sake) you have only to sit through *Anna Karenina,* their newest art product, to change your mind. Tolstoy, we always believed, was the author of *Anna Karenina,* but the film is not Tolstoy and *Anna Karenina* is not the novel.

What is it? It is that strange and slightly-nauseating confection: an M.G.M. art-production feature—the result of such judicious editing and remolding and distorting that the only remains of the original are the title and the names of the characters.

Now, it is frequently both necessary and desirable in the filming of a novel to take considerable liberty with the original script. But the M-G-M *artistes* have forgotten the original entirely. The tragedy of Anna's emotional life is a thing of profound beauty when lived against the Tolstoyan background of the nineteenth century Russian upper-class. Tear Anna's love-story away from its background, cut it loose from this organic texture, and it ceases to be significant or moving. It becomes a flat, almost-meaningless chronicle—to which M-G-M has added a generous dose of artistic sensuality.

So stupid and careless have been the M-G-M *artistes* that they sometimes forget *Anna Karenina* takes place in Russia. When the butler announces the guests at a ball, the effect is plainly—if unintentionally—comic. If the uniforms could be blotted out, the spectator would imagine the locale to be Paris, London or even Hollywood.

Greta Garbo, had her directors been interested in more than sex and sensuality, might have created a memorable character—an authentic Anna.

PETER ELLIS.

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Charlie Chaplin's New Picture

B. SHUMIATSKI

CHARLIE CHAPLIN has one never-changing mask: a derby, a cane, triangularly-shaped moustache, a flat-footed walk and worn-out shoes. In each one of his films he plays the role of an eternal failure, a little lonely man in a big world.

The theme of his films—the tragedy of the petty bourgeoisie in capitalist society—he depicts with a most remarkable mastery, presenting new and original ideas in each of his films.

Five years ago Charlie Chaplin became silent. The philistines and prostitutes of the bourgeois press, who always considered Chaplin as a mere clown, attempted to bury him. After five years of silence, however this great artist began to work on a new film.

The new film, unpretentiously called *Modern Times,* depicts the period of "prosperity," the period to which the capitalist bards refer now as the "golden dream"—"a heaven on earth that was" . . . This, in brief, is the theme:

The office of a director of a large factory. The director, like a demigod, rules this kingdom of machines and the thousands of workers who are chained to the conveyors like prisoners on a chain gang. In this world of slavery, exploitation and the cold glitter of the all-powerful machines everything is subordinated to his will. Even his movements are majestic and dominating.

Slowly and majestically he lights a cigar. Slowly and majestically he turns on the lever which projects on a screen the mad tempo of his machines and the workers at them.

Cautiously and cleverly Chaplin laughs at the capitalist system of rationalization.

The director does not have to exhaust himself by making extra motions. He does not have to breathe the stale air of the factory. He controls the work and gives orders without even going out from his office. All he has to do is turn on the lever of a projection machine and even the remotest corners of the factory are flashed across a screen.

Among those who work at a large conveyor is Charlie Chaplin. He stands as though chained to the conveyor. Day in, day out, year in, year out—he has already become stupefied and mad—he executes the same movements. He is screwing on nuts to some parts of a machine.

Chaplin can't stand it any longer. For a moment he leaves the conveyor. He can hardly move. He is so dizzy and fatigued that he mistakes the nose of the foreman who stands nearby for a nut and begins working on it with his wrench. The large buttons on the dress of the office girl who bends down to fix her stockings, seem like screw-nuts to him. In horror, the office girl runs from this strange worker. Charlie chases after her. On the way he unscrews nuts from dangerous parts of machines, disconnects the power—throws the rhythmical life of the factory into chaos.

Suddenly he hears the voice of the director and sees his angry face shown on screens that hang all over the factory. Subdued by the director's will, he returns to his place. The bell announcing the lunch period brings him somewhat to himself.

The projector takes us again into the director's office where a strange type of a machine is being brought in. It is a dinner apparatus. It can feed the workers automatically, without any loss of time and also with a great deal of economy for the owners.

The director decides to test this new invention. The machine is taken into the factory. Chaplin is chosen for the test. The machine gets hold of him by the neck and a plate of soup is emptied into his throat. Charlie is thrown into a sweat.

Then a new dish comes up on the shelf. Without reaching the level of his mouth, however, the food, which is pushed out by small shovels, descends into his open collar. The worker begins to wriggle in pain. The food is hot. The inventors are a little confused. They try hastily to fix the defects in the machine.

The mechanic examines some parts of the machine and begins to tighten some nuts. Charlie, as though hypnotized, with his eyes wide open, gazes at the cursed nuts which, even now that he has become a victim of experimenters, give him no rest.

The mechanic is nervous. He forgets to tighten two nuts and leaves them on the shelf. He turns the lever and a new plate full of food appears. Having reached the level of Charlie's chin the plate, automatically, is pressed to his lips and the little shovels begin to push the food down his throat, together with the two forgotten nuts.

Charlie's sad eyes are full of horror. He struggles to free himself from the iron clasp of the machine. He cries out. . . .

The mechanic and agent of the firm rush again to the machine to fix it. The all-powerful director stops them:

"It won't go. It is not practical enough. It feeds all right but it is too complicated

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and too expensive to operate . . ."

Thus Chaplin laughs at rationalization. His laughter assumes here the threatening satirical tone of indictment.

The conveyor is moving again. The director is increasing the speed.

Charlie and the other workers have become madly-moving automatons. Human motions have become mechanized.

Everywhere Charlie sees nuts. He chases after them all over the factory. Nuts everywhere. . . . The whole world for him is concentrated in a nut. . . .

Suddenly he sees through the window a little old battered automobile carrying long boards. Charlie jumps out through the window and runs after the automobile to tighten the loose nuts. He falls, however, and all he succeeds in getting a hold of is a red rag —a danger sign.

He finds himself on the pavement holding in his hand the wrench and the red rag.

A group of striking workers come over to the spot where Charlie fell. The police are after them. Charlie is scared. With the red rag in his hand he runs back and forth between the cops and the workers. Finally he is caught.

In this part of the film Charlie Chaplin remains true to himself. He is lonely. His path has nothing in common with the path of the masses who are rapidly becoming revolutionized. It is the path of the "eternal" failure. He shows, however, honestly and truthfully how the American working class is carrying on a struggle against capitalism although he himself, to be sure, does not believe in the successful outcome of this struggle.

Charlie is now by himself in a cell. He has displeased the guards and he is being dragged into another cell. Finally he is pushed into a cell that is already occupied by a huge beastly looking individual. Lonely and fearful, Charlie gazes at the huge man, like a rabbit at a cobra. His knees shiver. The giant jeers at the dwarf.

But the world of criminals is kinder and more considerate than the regime of capitalist rationalization. Here everybody is considerate of the kindhearted simpleton. Charlie becomes acclimatized to the jail. He even begins to walk straighter, although at times, when he dreams, he is still in everyone's way, especially when the prisoners are taken out for a walk.

Between Ourselves

B. Shumiatski was head of the recent Soviet Cinema Commission to the United States. His article on Charlie Chaplin was translated from the Moscow Pravda by Leon Dennen.

A section of *Marching! Marching!* by Clara Weatherwax, the prize winning novel in THE NEW MASSES Contest, will be published next week, in our quarterly issue. The John Day Company is bringing the book out early in November.

Ernest Hemingway's story of the veterans in the Florida hurricane last week attracted considerable attention, most of the New York papers quoting from it as well as papers in many other cities. The New York Daily News used it as the occasion for a long Red-baiting editorial, showing that the Administration was completely innocent in the matter and that the veterans who were smashed to death by the wind or drowned by the tidal wave had been better off on Matecumbe Keys than hoboing. Incidentally, the title over Hemingway's story, "Who Murdered the Vets?" was written by us.

Activity is being resumed by The Friends of THE NEW MASSES. Members who will be able to give some time to the work this fall and winter are requested to communicate with the Promotion Department of THE NEW MASSES, 31 East 27 Street, New York. Particular emphasis is being placed at the outset on work now being planned in the New York area.

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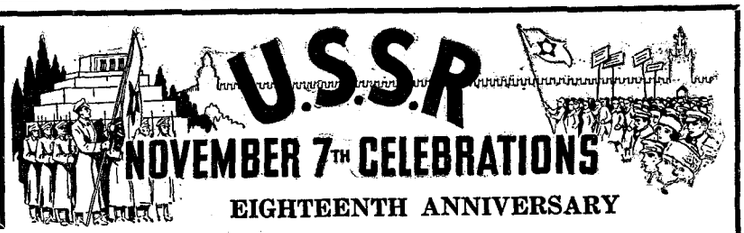

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